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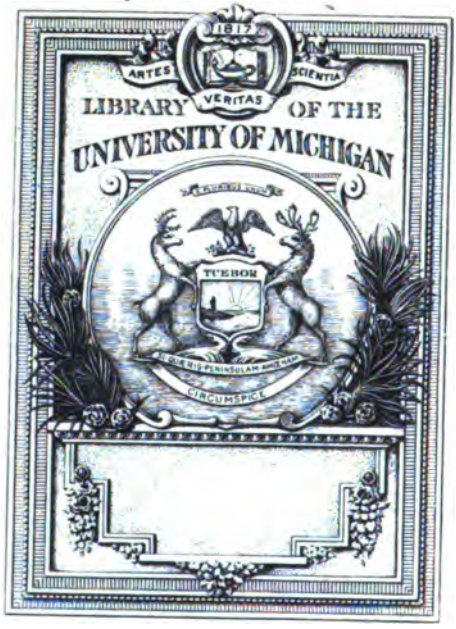
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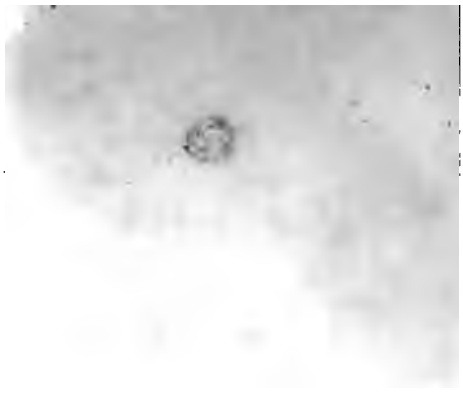

THE WORKS

OF

DR. ISAAC BARROW.

VOL. II.

THE WORKS

OF

DR. ISAAC BARROW.

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE,

SUMMARY OF EACH DISCOURSE, NOTES, &c.

BY THE REV. T. S. HUGHES, B.D.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

SERMONS.

PAGE

XVII.—The folly of slander.
PROVERBS X. 18.—He that uttereth slander is a fool. 1

XVIII.—The folly of slander.
PROVERBS X. 18.—He that uttereth slander is a fool. 23

XIX.—Against detraction.
JAMES IV. 11.—Speak not evil one of another, brethren. 40

XX.—Against rash censuring and judging.
MATTHEW VII. 1.—Judge not. 58

XXI.—Of quietness, and doing our own business.
1 THESSALONIANS IV. 11.—And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business. 85

XXII.—Of quietness, and doing our own business.
1 THESSALONIANS IV. 11.—And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business. 105

PAGE

XXIII.—Of the love of God.

MATTHEW XXII. 37.—Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. . . . 121

XXIV.—Of the love of God.

MATTHEW XXII. 37.—Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. . . . 143

XXV.—Of the love of our neighbor.

MATTHEW XXII. 39.—And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 162

XXVI.—Of the love of our neighbor.

MATTHEW XXII. 39.—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 185

XXVII.—The nature, properties, and acts of charity.

EPHESIANS V. 2.—And walk in love. 200

XXVIII.—Motives and arguments to charity.

HEBREWS X. 24.—Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works. 228

XXIX.—Of a peaceable temper and carriage.

ROMANS XII. 18.—If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 252

XXX.—Of a peaceable temper and carriage.

ROMANS XII. 18.—If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 280

XXXI.—The duty and reward of bounty to the poor.

PSALM CXII. 9.—He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honor. 308

PAGE

XXXII.—On the passion of our blessed Saviour.

PHILIPPIANS II. 8.—And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 381

XXXIII.—Of doing all in the name of Christ.

COLOSSIANS III. 17.—And whatsoever ye do in word, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. . . 423

XXXIV.—Of being imitators of Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS IV. 16.—I beseech you, be followers of me: or, I exhort you, be imitators of me. . . . 446

XXXV.—Abiding in Christ to be demonstrated by walking as Christ did.

1 JOHN II. 6.—He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk as he walked. 468

XXXVI.—Of submission to the divine will.

LUKE XXII. 42.—Nevertheless, let not my will, but thine, be done. 487

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SERMONS.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XVII.

PROVERBS, CHAP. X.—VERSE 18.

It is shown that general declamations against vice are indeed exceedingly useful; but that men ought to be made particularly acquainted with their sins, and by proper arguments dissuaded from them. Hence the sin of *slander* is now selected, being in nature vile, and in practice common. There are principles innate to men, which ever have, and ever will incline them to it.: this point enlarged on. But from especial causes, the present age does peculiarly abound in this practice: manners of the age described at length. Hence it is, that no discourse appears more needful or useful than that which serves to correct or check so vile an offence. Endeavors to effect this; 1. by describing the nature; 2. by declaring the folly of it.

I. For explication of its nature, slander may be described as the uttering false (or equivalent to false, morally false) speech against our neighbor, in prejudice to his fame, his safety, or his welfare, out of malignity, vanity, rashness, or bad design: this forbidden in holy Scripture under various terms, some of which signify the nature, others the special kinds, manners, or ends of this practice. But it seems most fully intelligible if

we observe the several kinds and degrees thereof; as also if we reflect on the various ways and manners of practising it. The principal kinds stated as follow.

1. The grossest kind of slander is that which in the decalogue is called *bearing false testimony against our neighbor;* that is, flatly charging him with facts which he never committed. Instance in the case of Naboth. This kind is the most rare, and they who are guilty of it are accounted most vile and infamous; but there are many out of the court, who run about scattering false reports, and infecting society with their poisonous breath, who are scarcely less guilty.

2. Another kind is the affixing scandalous names, injurious epithets, and odious characters on persons, which they deserve not. Instance of Corah and his accomplices against Moses; of the Pharisees against our Saviour; of the Jews against the Apostles: evil of such described.

3. Similar to this is the aspersing a man's actions with harsh censures and foul terms, importing that they proceed from ill principles, or tend to bad ends: thus when we say of him that is generously hospitable, that he is profuse; of him that is prudently frugal, that he is niggardly; of him that is conspicuous in virtuous practices, that he is actuated by ambition or ostentation; when we ascribe a man's charity to vain-glory, or his strictness of life to hypocrisy; we are indeed slanderers, imitating the great calumniator, who thus slandered even God himself; Gen. iii. 5.

4. Another kind of slander is the perverting a man's words or actions disadvantageously by affected misconstruction. All words are ambiguous, and capable of different senses. Instance of the false witnesses against our Lord: Matt. xxvi. 60. 61.

5. Another sort is, a partial and lame representation of men's discourse or practice, suppressing some part of the truth, or concealing some extenuating circumstances. In such a

manner easily, without uttering any logical untruth, one may yet grievously calumniate. Instances adduced.

6. Another kind of calumny consists in sly suggestions; which, although they do not assert downright falsehoods, yet breed sinister opinions in the hearers, especially in those who from weakness, credulity, jealousy, or prejudice, are prone to entertain them. Many ways instanced in which this is done; all which, as they issue from the principles of slander, and perform its work, deservedly bear the guilt thereof.

7. A like kind is that of oblique and covert reflexions; when a man does not directly or expressly charge his neighbor with faults, but yet so speaks, that he is understood, or reasonably presumed to do so; which is a very cunning and mischievous way of slandering.

8. Another kind is that of magnifying and aggravating the faults of others; raising any small miscarriage into a heinous crime, any slender defect into an odious vice; turning a small *mote in the eye* of our neighbor into a large *beam*.

9. Another is the imputing to our neighbor's practice, judgment, or profession, evil consequences, apt to render him odious, which have no dependence on or connexion with them: this point enlarged on.

Another practice, worthily bearing the guilt of slander, is the aiding it, by anywise furthering and abetting it. He that by crafty significations of ill-will prompts the slanderer to vent his poison; he that by a willing audience and attention shows himself ready to suck it up; he that expresses a delight therein, as he is a partner in the fact, so is he a sharer in the guilt. *He is a wicked doer*, says the wise man, *who giveth heed to false lips; and a liar who giveth ear to a naughty tongue.*

These are the chief and most common kinds of slander: the several ways of practising them are next considered, in order that we may avoid them.

1. The most notoriously heinous way is the forging and

immediately venting ill stories, as it is said of Doeg (Psalm lii. 2.), and as our Lord says of the Devil. (John viii. 44.). This is the supreme pitch of calumny.

2. Another way is, the receiving from others and venting such stories, which they who do it certainly know, or may reasonably presume, to be false. He that breweth lies may have more wit and skill; but the broacher showeth the like malice and wickedness.

3. Another way is, when one without competent examination or just reason, admits and spreads tales prejudicial to his neighbor's welfare; which is a very common and current practice: this topic enlarged on.

4. Of a kin to this way is the assenting to popular rumors, and thence affirming matters of obloquy to our neighbor: every one knows how easily such arise, and how nimbly they scatter themselves; whoever therefore gives heed to such, and thrusts himself among those who spread them, is either strongly injudicious, or very malignantly disposed. *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*, says the law.

5. Another slanderous course is, to build censures and reproaches on slender conjectures or uncertain suspicions, those *evil surmises* which St. Paul condemns: this topic enlarged on.

6. Another like way of slandering is impetuous or negligent sputtering out of words, without minding what truth or consequence there is in them; how they may touch or hurt our neighbor: to avoid this sin, we must not only be free from intending mischief, but wary of effecting it: for he who fires a shot into a crowd without regarding who may stand in his way, is no less guilty of doing mischief, and bound to make satisfaction for it, than if he had aimed at some particular person.

7. It is an ordinary way of proceeding to calumniate, for men, reflecting on some bad disposition in themselves, (although resulting from their own particular temper or principles,) to charge it presently on others, whom they presume to be like

themselves: this is to slander mankind, first in the gross, then in retail, as occasion serves.

These seem to be the chief kinds of slander, and most common ways of practising it. In which description, the folly of it must be clear: but to render this still more apparent, it will be farther displayed in the next discourse.

SERMON XVII.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROVERBS, CHAP. X.—VERSE 18.

He that uttereth slander is a fool.

GENERAL declamations against vice and sin are indeed excellently useful, as rousing men to consider and look about them: but they do often want effect, because they only raise confused apprehensions of things, and indeterminate propensions to action; the which usually, before men throughly perceive or resolve what they should practise, do decay and vanish. As he that cries out fire doth stir up people, and inspireth them with a kind of hovering tendency every way, yet no man thence to purpose moveth, until he be distinctly informed where the mischief is; then do they, who apprehend themselves concerned, run hastily to oppose it: so, till we particularly discern where our offences lie, (till we distinctly know the heinous nature and the mischievous consequences of them,) we scarce will effectually apply ourselves to correct them. Whence it is requisite that men should be particularly acquainted with their sins, and by proper arguments be dissuaded from them.

In order whereto I have now selected one sin to describe, and to dissuade from, being in nature as vile, and in practice as common, as any other whatever that hath prevailed among men. It is slander, a sin which in all times and places hath been epidemical and rife; but which especially doth seem to reign and rage in our age and country.

There are principles innate to men, which ever have, and

ever will incline them to this offence. Eager appetites to secular and sensual goods; violent passions, urging the prosecution of what men affect; wrath and displeasure against those who stand in the way of compassing their desires; emulation and envy toward those who hap to succeed better, or to attain a greater share in such things; excessive self-love; unaccountable malignity and vanity, are in some degrees connatural to all men, and ever prompt them to this dealing, as appearing the most efficacious, compendious, and easy way of satisfying such appetites, of promoting such designs, of discharging such passions. Slander thence hath always been a principal engine, whereby covetous, ambitious, envious, ill-natured, and vain persons have strove to supplant their competitors, and advance themselves; meaning thereby to procure, what they chiefly prize and like, wealth, or dignity, or reputation, favor and power in the court, respect and interest with the people.

But from especial causes our age peculiarly doth abound in this practice: for, besides the common dispositions inclining thereto, there are conceits newly coined, and greedily entertained by many, which seem purposely levelled at the disparagement of piety, charity, and justice, substituting interest in the room of conscience, authorising and commending, for good and wise, all ways serving to private advantage. There are implacable dissensions, fierce animosities, and bitter zeals sprung up; there is an extreme curiosity, niceness, and delicacy of judgment; there is a mighty affectation of seeming wise and witty by any means; there is a great unsettlement of mind, and corruption of manners, generally diffused over people: from which sources it is no wonder that this flood hath so overflown, that no banks can restrain it, no fences are able to resist it; so that ordinary conversation is full with it, and no demeanor can be secure from it.

If we do mark what is done in many (might I not say, in most) companies, what is it, but one telling malicious stories of, or fastening odious characters on another? What do men commonly please themselves in so much, as in carping and harshly censuring, in defaming and abusing their neighbors? Is it not the sport and divertisement of many, to cast dirt in the faces of all they meet with; to bespatter any man with

foul imputations? Doth not in every corner a Momus lurk, from the venom of whose spiteful or petulant tongue no eminency of rank, dignity of place, or sacredness of office, no innocence or integrity of life, no wisdom or circumspection in behavior, no good nature, or benignity in dealing and carriage, can protect any person? Do not men assume to themselves a liberty of telling romances, and framing characters concerning their neighbor, as freely as a poet doth about Hector or Turnus, Thersites or Draucus? Do they not usurp a power of playing with, of tossing about, of tearing in pieces their neighbor's good name, as if it were the veriest toy in the world? Do not many, 'having a form of godliness,' (some of them demurely, others confidently, both without any sense of, or remorse for what they do,) backbite their brethren? Is it not grown so common a thing to asperse causelessly, that no man wonders at it, that few dislike, that scarce any detest it? that most notorious calumniators are heard, not only with patience, but with pleasure; yea are even held in vogue and reverence, as men of a notable talent, and very serviceable to their party; so that slander seemeth to have lost its nature, and not to be now an odious sin, but a fashionable humor, a way of pleasing entertainment, a fine knack, or curious feat of policy; so that no man at least taketh himself or others to be accountable for what is said in this way? Is not, in fine, the case become such, that whoever hath in him any love of truth, any sense of justice or honesty, any spark of charity toward his brethren, shall hardly be able to satisfy himself in the conversations he meeteth; but will be tempted, with the holy prophet, to wish himself sequestered from society, and cast into solitude; repeating those words of his, 'Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they are—an assembly of treacherous men, and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies?' This he wished in an age so resembling ours, that I fear the description with equal patness may suit both: 'Take ye heed' (said he then; and may we not advise the like now?') 'every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders. They will deceive every

one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.'

Such being the state of things, obvious to experience, no discourse may seem more needful or useful, than that which serveth to correct or check this practice: the which I shall endeavor to do, 1. by describing the nature, 2. by declaring the folly of it; or showing it to be very true which the wise man here asserteth, 'he that uttereth slander is a fool.' The which particulars I hope so to prosecute, that any man shall be able easily to discern, and ready heartily to detest this practice.

I. For explication of its nature, we may describe slander to be the uttering false (or equivalent to false, morally false) speech against our neighbor, in prejudice to his fame, his safety, his welfare, or concernment in any kind, out of malignity, vanity, rashness, ill-nature, or bad design. That which is in holy Scripture forbidden and reproved under several names and notions; of bearing false witness, false accusation, railing censure, sycophantry, tale-bearing, whispering, backbiting, supplanting, taking up reproach: which terms some of them do signify the nature, others denote the special kinds, others imply the manners, others suggest the ends of this practice. But it seemeth most fully intelligible by observing the several kinds and degrees thereof; as also by reflecting on the divers ways and manners of practising it.

The principal kinds thereof I observe to be these:

1. The grossest kind of slander is that which in the decalogue is called 'bearing false testimony against our neighbor;' that is, flatly charging him with facts the which he never committed, and is nowise guilty of. As in the case of Naboth, when men were suborned to say, 'Naboth did blaspheme God and the king:' and as was David's case, when he thus complained, 'False witnesses did rise up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not of.' This kind in the highest way (that is, in judicial proceedings) is more rare; and of all men, they who are detected to practise it are held most vile and infamous; as being plainly the most pernicious and perilous instruments of injustice, the most desperate enemies of all men's right and safety that can be. But also out of the court there are many

knights-errant of the post, whose business it is to run about scattering false reports; sometimes loudly proclaiming them in open companies, sometimes closely whispering them in dark corners; thus infecting conversation with their poisonous breath: these no less notoriously are guilty of this kind, as bearing always the same malice, and sometimes breeding as ill effects.

2. Another kind is, affixing scandalous names, injurious epithets, and odious characters on persons, which they deserve not. As when Corah and his complices did accuse Moses of being ambitious, unjust, and tyrannical: when the Pharisees called our Lord an impostor, a blasphemer, a sorcerer, a glutton and wine-bibber, an incendiary and perverter of the people, one that 'spake against Cæsar,' and 'forbad to give tribute:' when the Apostles were charged of being pestilent, turbulent, factious and seditious fellows. This sort being very common, and thence in ordinary repute not so bad, yet in just estimation may be judged even worse than the former; as doing to our neighbor more heavy and more irreparable wrong. For it imposeth on him really more blame, and that such which he can hardly shake off: because the charge signifieth habit of evil, and includeth many acts; then, being general and indefinite, can scarce be disproved. He, for instance, that calleth a sober man drunkard, doth impute to him many acts of such intemperance; some really past, others probably future; and no particular time or place being specified, how can a man clear himself of that imputation, especially with those who are not throughly acquainted with his conversation? So he that calleth a man unjust, proud, perverse, hypocritical, doth load him with most grievous faults, which it is not possible that the most innocent person should discharge himself from.

3. Like to that kind is this, aspersing a man's actions with harsh censures and foul terms, importing that they proceed from ill principles, or tend to bad ends; so as it doth not or cannot appear. Thus when we say of him that is generously hospitable, that he is profuse; of him that is prudently frugal, that he is niggardly; of him that is cheerful and free in his conversation, that he is vain or loose; of him that is serious and resolute in a good way, that he is sullen or morose; of him that is con-

spicuous and brisk in virtuous practice, that it is ambition or ostentation which acts him; of him that is close and bashful in the like good way, that it is sneaking stupidity, or want of spirit; of him that is reserved, that it is craft; of him that is open, that it is simplicity in him: when we ascribe a man's liberality and charity to vain-glory or popularity; his strictness of life and constancy in devotion, to superstition or hypocrisy: when, I say, we pass such censures, or impose such characters, on the laudable or innocent practice of our neighbors, we are indeed slanderers, imitating therein the great calumniator, who thus did slander even God himself, imputing his prohibition of the fruit unto envy toward men; ('God,' said he, 'doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;') who thus did ascribe the steady piety of Job, not to a conscientious love and fear of God, but to policy and selfish design; 'Doth Job fear God for nought?'

Whoever indeed pronounceth concerning his neighbor's intentions otherwise than as they are evidently expressed by words, or signified by overt actions, is a slanderer; because he pretendeth to know, and dareth to aver, that which he noways possibly can tell whether it be true; because the heart is exempt from all jurisdiction here, is only subject to the government and trial of another world; because no man can judge concerning the truth of such accusations; because no man can exempt or defend himself from them: so that apparently such practice doth thwart all course of justice and equity.

4. Another kind is, perverting a man's words or actions disadvantageously by affected misconstruction. All words are ambiguous and capable of different senses, (some fair, some more foul;) all actions have two handles, one that candor and charity will, another that disingenuity and spite may, lay hold on; and in such cases to misapprehend is a calumnious procedure, arguing malignant disposition and mischievous design. Thus when two men did witness that our Lord affirmed he 'could demolish the temple, and rear it again in three days;' although he did indeed speak words to that purpose, meaning them in a figurative sense, discernible enough to those who would candidly have minded his drift and way of speaking; yet

they who crudely alleged them against him are called false witnesses. 'At last,' saith the gospel, 'came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple,' &c. Thus also when some certified of St. Stephen, as having said that 'Jesus of Nazareth should destroy that place, and change the customs that Moses delivered;' although probably he did speak words near to that purpose, yet are those men called false witnesses: 'And,' saith St. Luke, 'they set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words,' &c. Which instances plainly do show, if we would avoid the guilt of slander, how careful we should be to interpret fairly and favorably the words and the actions of our neighbor.

5. Another sort of this practice is partial and lame representation of men's discourse, or their practice; suppressing some part of the truth in them, or concealing some circumstances about them, which might serve to explain, to excuse, or to extenuate them. In such a manner easily, without uttering any logical untruth, one may yet grievously calumniate. Thus suppose that a man speaketh a thing on supposition, or with exception, or in way of objection, or merely for disputation sake, in order to the discussion or clearing of truth; he that should report him asserting it absolutely, unlimitedly, positively, and peremptorily, as his own settled judgment, would notoriously calumniate. If one should be inveigled by fraud, or driven by violence, or slip by chance into a bad place, or bad company; he that should so represent the gross of that accident as to breed an opinion of that person, that out of pure disposition and design he did put himself there, doth slanderously abuse that innocent person. The reporter in such cases must not think to defend himself by pretending that he spake nothing false; for such propositions, however true in logic, may justly be deemed lies in morality, being uttered with a malicious and deceitful (that is, with a calumnious) mind, being apt to impress false conceits, and to produce hurtful effects concerning our neighbor. There are slanderous truths, as well as slanderous falsehoods: when truth is uttered with a deceitful heart, and to a base end, it becomes a lie. 'He that speaketh truth,' saith the wise man, 'showeth forth righteousness, but a false witness de-

ceit.' Deceiving is the proper work of slander: and truth abused to that end putteth on its nature, and will engage into like guilt.*

6. Another kind of calumny is, by instilling sly suggestions; which although they do not downrightly assert falsehoods, yet they breed sinister opinions in the hearers; especially in those who from weakness or credulity, from jealousy or prejudice, from negligence or inadvertency, are prone to entertain them. This is done many ways; by propounding wily suppositions, shrewd insinuations, crafty questions, and specious comparisons, intimating a possibility, or inferring some likelihood of, and thence inducing to believe the fact. Doth not, saith this kind of slanderer, his temper incline him to do thus? may not his interest have swayed him thereto? had he not fair opportunity and strong temptation to it? hath he not acted so in like cases? Judge you therefore whether he did it not. Thus the close slanderer argueth; and a weak or prejudiced person is thereby so caught, that he presently is ready thence to conclude the thing done. Again; he doeth well, saith the sycophant, it is true; but why, and to what end? Is it not, as most men do, out of ill design? may he not dissemble now? may he not recoil hereafter? have not others made as fair a show? yet we know what came of it. Thus do calumnious tongues pervert the judgments of men to think ill of the most innocent, and meanly of the worthiest actions. Even commendation itself is often used calumniously, with intent to breed dislike and ill-will toward a person commended in envious or jealous ears; or so as to give passage to dispraises, and render the accusations following more credible. It is an artifice commonly observed to be much in use there, where the finest tricks of supplanting are practised with greatest effect: so that, *pessimum inimicorum genus, laudantes;* there is no more pestilent enemy than a malevolent praiser. All these kinds of dealing, as they issue from the principles of slander, and perform its work, so they deservedly bear the guilt thereof.

* Vid. Herm. Pastor. Where the Pastor observes, that the devil doth in his temptations intersperse some truths, serving to render his delusions passable.

7. A like kind is that of oblique and covert reflexions; when a man doth not directly or expressly charge his neighbor with faults, but yet so speaketh that he is understood, or reasonably presumed to do it. This is a very cunning and very mischievous way of slandering; for therein the skulking calumniator keepeth a reserve for himself, and cutteth off from the person concerned the means of defence. If he goeth to clear himself from the matter of such aspersions; What need, saith this insidious speaker, of that? must I needs mean you? did I name you? why do you then assume it to yourself? do you not prejudge yourself guilty? I did not, but your own conscience it seemeth doth, accuse you. You are so jealous and suspicious, as persons over-wise or guilty use to be. So meaneth this serpent out of the hedge securely and unavoidably to bite his neighbor; and is in that respect more base and more hurtful than the most flat and positive slanderer.

8. Another kind is that of magnifying and aggravating the faults of others; raising any small miscarriage into a heinous crime, any slender defect into an odious vice, and any common infirmity into a strange enormity; turning a small mote in the eye of our neighbor into a huge beam, a little dimple in his face into a monstrous wen. This is plainly slander, at least in degree, and according to the surplusage whereby the censure doth exceed the fault. As he that, on the score of a small debt, doth extort a great sum, is no less a thief, in regard to what amounts beyond his due, than if without any pretence he had violently or fraudulently seized on it; so is he a slanderer, that by heightening faults or imperfections, doth charge his neighbor with greater blame, or loads him with more disgrace than he deserves. It is not only slander to pick a hole where there is none, but to make that wider which is, so that it appeareth more ugly, and cannot so easily be mended. For charity is wont to extenuate faults, justice doth never exaggerate them. As no man is exempt from some defects, or can live free from some misdemeanors, so by this practice every man may be rendered very odious and infamous.

9. Another kind of slander is, imputing to our neighbor's practice, judgment, or profession, evil consequences (apt to render him odious or despicable) which have no dependence

on them, or connexion with them. There do in every age occur disorders and mishaps, springing from various complications of causes, working some of them in a more open and discernible, others in a more secret and subtile way; (especially from divine judgment and providence checking or chastising sin:) from such occurrences it is common to snatch occasion and matter of calumny. Those who are disposed this way are ready peremptorily to charge them on whomever they dislike or dissent from, although without any apparent cause, or on most frivolous and senseless pretences; yea, often, when reason showeth the quite contrary, and they who are so charged are in just esteem of all men the least obnoxious to such accusations. So usually the best friends of mankind, those who most heartily wish the peace and prosperity of the world, and most earnestly to their power strive to promote them, have all the disturbances and disasters happening charged on them by those fiery vixens, who (in pursuance of their base designs, or gratification of their wild passions) really do themselves embroil things, and raise miserable combustions in the world. So it is, that they who have the conscience to do mischief, will have the confidence also to disavow the blame and the iniquity, to lay the burden of it on those who are most innocent. Thus, whereas nothing more disposeth men to live orderly and peaceably, nothing more conduceth to the settlement and safety of the public, nothing so much draweth blessings down from heaven on the common-weal, as true religion; yet nothing hath been more ordinary, than to attribute all the miscarriages and mischiefs that happened unto it; even those are laid at its door, which plainly do arise from the contempt or neglect of it: being the natural fruits, or the just punishments of irreligion. King Ahab, by 'forsaking God's commandments,' and following wicked superstitions, had 'troubled Israel,' drawing sore judgments and calamities thereon; yet had he the heart and the face to charge those events on the great assertor of piety, Elias: 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?' The Jews by provocation of divine justice had set themselves in a fair way toward desolation and ruin; this event to come they had the presumption to lay on the faith of our Lord's doctrines: 'If,' said they, 'we let him alone, all men will

believe on him, and the Romans shall come, and take away our place and nation:' whenas, in truth, a compliance with his directions and admonitions had been the only means to prevent those presaged mischiefs. And, *Si Tibris ascenderit in mœnia*,* if any public calamity did appear, then *Christianos ad leones*, Christians must be charged and persecuted as the causes thereof. To them it was that Julian and other Pagans did impute all the concussions, confusions, and devastations falling on the Roman empire. The sacking of Rome by the Goths they cast on Christianity: for the vindication of it from which reproach St. Austin did write those renowned books *de Civitate Dei*. So liable are the best and most innocent sort of men to be calumniously accused in this manner.

Another practice (worthily bearing the guilt of slander) is, being aiding and accessory thereto, by anywise furthering, cherishing, abetting it. He that by crafty significations of ill-will doth prompt the slanderer to vent his poison; he that by a willing audience and attention doth readily suck it up, or who greedily swalloweth it down by credulous approbation and assent; he that pleasingly relisheth and smacketh at it, or expresseth a delightful complacence therein; as he is a partner in the fact, so he is a sharer in the guilt. There are not only slanderous throats, but slanderous ears also; not only wicked inventions, which ingender and brood lies, but wicked assents, which hatch and foster them. Not only the spiteful mother which conceiveth such spurious brats, but the midwife that helpeth to bring them forth, the nurse that feedeth them, the guardian that traineth them up to maturity, and setteth them forth to live in the world; as they do really contribute to their subsistence, so deservedly they partake in the blame due to them, and must be responsible for the mischief they do. For indeed were it not for such free entertainers, such nourishers, such encouragers of them, slanders commonly would die in the womb, or prove still-born, or presently entering into the cold air would expire, or for want of nourishment soon would starve. It is such friends and patrons of them who are the causes that they are so rife; they it is who set ill-natured, base, and de-

* Tertull. Apol.

signing people on devising, searching after, and picking up malicious and idle stories. Were it not for such customers, the trade of calumniating would fall. Many pursue it merely out of servility and flattery, to tickle the ears, to sooth the humor, to gratify the malignant disposition or ill-will of others; who on the least discouragement would give over the practice. If therefore we would exempt ourselves from all guilt of slander, we must not only abstain from venting it, but forbear to regard or countenance it: for 'he is (saith the wise man) a wicked doer, who giveth heed to false lips; and a liar, who giveth ear to a naughty tongue.' Yea, if we thoroughly would be clear from it, we must show an aversation from hearing it, an unwillingness to believe it; an indignation against it; so either stifling it in the birth, or condemning it to death being uttered. This is the sure way to destroy it, and to prevent its mischief. If we would stop our ears, we should stop the slanderer's mouth; if we would 'resist the calumniator, he would fly from us;' if we would reprove him, we should repel him. For as 'the north wind driveth away rain, so (the wise man telleth us) doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue.'

These are the chief and most common kinds of slander; and there are several ways of practising them worthy our observing, that we may avoid them; namely these,

1. The most notoriously heinous way is, forging and immediately venting ill stories. As it is said of Doeg, 'Thy tongue deviseth mischief;' and of another like companion, 'Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit:' and as our Lord saith of the Devil, 'When he speaketh a lie,' ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων λαλεῖ, 'he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.' This palpably is the supreme pitch of calumny, uncapable of any qualification or excuse: hell cannot go beyond this; the cursed fiend himself cannot worse employ his wit, than in minting wrongful falsehoods.

2. Another way is, receiving from others, and venting such stories, which they who do it certainly know, or may reasonably presume, to be false; the becoming hucksters of counterfeit wares, or factors in this vile trade. There is no false coiner, who hath not some complices and emissaries ready to take from his hand, and put off his money: and such slan-

derers at second hand are scarce less guilty than the first authors. He that breweth lies may have more wit and skill; but the broacher showeth the like malice and wickedness. In this there is no great difference between the great Devil, that frameth scandalous reports, and the little imps, that run about and disperse them.

3. Another way is, when one without competent examination, due weighing, and just reason, doth admit and spread tales prejudicial to his neighbor's welfare; relying for his warrant (as to the truth of them) on any slight or slender authority. This is a very common and current practice: men presume it lawful enough to say over whatever they hear; to report any thing, if they can quote an author for it. It is not, say they, my invention; I tell it as I heard it: *sit fides penes authorem;* let him that informed me undergo the blame, if it prove false. So do they conceive themselves excusable for being the instruments of injurious disgrace and damage to their neighbors. But they greatly mistake therein: for as this practice commonly doth arise from the same wicked principles, at least in some degree, and produceth altogether the like mischievous effects, as the wilful devising and conveying slander: so it no less thwarteth the rules of duty, and laws of equity; God hath prohibited it, and reason doth condemn it. 'Thou shalt not' (saith God in the law) 'go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people:' as a tale-bearer, (as Rachil, that is,) as a merchant or trader in ill reports and stories concerning our neighbor, to his prejudice. Not only the framing them, but the dealing in them beyond reason and necessity, is interdicted. And it is part of a good man's character in the fifteenth psalm, *Non accipit opprobrium*, 'He taketh not up a reproach against his neighbor;' that is, he doth not easily entertain it, much less doth he effectually propagate it: and in our text, 'He,' it is said, 'that uttereth slander' (not only he that conceiveth it) 'is a fool.'

And in reason, before exact trial and cognisance, to meddle with the fame and interest of another, is evidently a practice full of iniquity, such as no man can allow in his own case, or brook being used toward himself, without judging himself to be extremely abused by such reporters. In all reason and equity,

(yea in all discretion,) before we yield credence to any report concerning our neighbor, or adventure to relate it, many things are carefully to be weighed and scanned. We should concerning our author consider whether he be not a particular enemy, or dissaffected to him; whether he be not ill-humored, or a delighter in telling bad stories; whether he be not dishonest, or unregardful of justice in his dealings and discourse; whether he be not vain, or careless of what he saith; whether he be not light and credulous, or apt to be imposed on by any small appearance; whether at least in the present case he be not negligent, or too forward and rash in speaking. We should also concerning the matter reported mind, whether it be possible or probable; whether suitable to the disposition of our neighbor, to his principles, to the constant tenor of his practice; whether the action imputed to him be not liable to misapprehension, or his words to misconstruction. All reason and equity do, I say, exact from us, diligently to consider such things, before we do either embrace ourselves, or transmit unto others, any story concerning our neighbor; lest unadvisedly we do him irreparable wrong and mischief. Briefly, we should take his case for our own, and consider whether we ourselves should be content, that on like grounds or testimonies any man should believe or report disgraceful things concerning us. If we fail to do thus, we do (vainly, or rashly, or maliciously) conspire with the slanderer to the wrong of our innocent neighbor; and that in the psalmist (by a parity of reason) may be transferred to us, Thou hast consented unto the liar, and hast partaken with the author of calumny.

4. Of kin to this way is the assenting to popular rumors, and thence affirming matters of obloquy to our neighbor. Every one by experience knows how easily false news do rise, and how nimbly they scatter themselves; how often they are raised from nothing, how soon they from small sparks grow into a great blaze, how easily from one thing they are transformed into another: especially news of this kind, which do suit and feed the bad humor of the vulgar. 'Tis obvious to any man how true that is of Tacitus, how void of consideration, of judgment, of equity, the busy and talking part of mankind is. Whoever therefore gives heed to flying tales, and thrusts himself into the

herd of those who spread them, is either strangely injudicious, or very malignantly disposed. If he want not judgment, he cannot but know, that when he complieth with popular fame, it is mere chance that he doth not slander, or rather it is odds that he shall do so: he consequently showeth himself to be indifferent whether he doth it or no, or rather that he doth incline to do it: whence, not caring to be otherwise, or loving to be a slanderer, he in effect and just esteem is such; having at least a slanderous heart and inclination. He that puts it to the venture whether he lieth or no, doth *eo ipso* lie morally, as declaring no care or love of truth. 'Thou shalt not' (saith the law) 'follow a multitude to do evil:' and with like reason we should not follow the multitude in speaking evil of our neighbor.

5. Another slanderous course is, to build censures and reproaches on slender conjectures, or uncertain suspicions, (those ὑπόνοιαι πονηραί, 'evil surmises,' which St. Paul condemneth.) Of these occasion can never be wanting to them who seek them, or are ready to embrace them; no innocence, no wisdom can anywise prevent them; and if they may be admitted as grounds of defamation, no man's good name can be secure. But he that on such accounts dareth to asperse his neighbor is in moral computation no less a slanderer, than if he did the like out of pure invention, or without any ground at all: for doubtful and false in this case differ little; to devise, and to divine, in matters of this nature, do import near the same. He that will judge or speak ill of others, ought to be well assured of what he thinks or says: he that asserteth that which he doth not know to be true, doth as well lie, as he that affirmeth that which he knoweth to be false; (for he deceiveth the hearers, begetting in them an opinion that he is assured of what he affirms:) especially in dealing with the concernments of others, whose right and repute justice doth oblige us to beware of infringing, charity should dispose us to regard and tender as our own. It is not every possibility, every seeming, every faint show or glimmering appearance, which sufficeth to ground bad opinion or reproachful discourse concerning our brother: the matter should be clear, notorious, and palpable, before we admit a disadvantageous conceit into our head, a distasteful

resentment into our heart, a harsh word into our mouth about him. Men may fancy themselves sagacious and shrewd, (persons of deep judgment and fine wit they may be taken for,) when they can dive into others hearts, and sound their intentions; when through thick mists or at remote distances they can descry faults in them; when they collect ill of them by long trains, and subtle fetches of discourse: but in truth they do thereby rather bewray in themselves small love of truth, care of justice, or sense of charity, together with little wisdom and discretion: for truth is only seen in a clear light; justice requireth strict proof: charity thinketh no evil, and believeth all things for the best; wisdom is not forward to pronounce before full evidence. ('He,' saith the wise man, 'that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.') In fine, they who proceed thus, as it is usual that they speak falsely, as it is casual that they ever speak truly, as they affect to speak ill, true or false; so worthily they are to be reckoned among slanderers.

6. Another like way of slandering is, impetuous or negligent sputtering out of words, without minding what truth or consequence there is in them, how they may touch or hurt our neighbor. To avoid this sin, we must not only be free from intending mischief, but wary of effecting it; not only careful of not wronging one distinct person, but of harming any promiscuously; not only abstinent from aiming directly, but provident not to hit casually any person with obloquy. For as he that dischargeth shot into a crowd, or so as not to look about regarding who may stand in the way, is no less guilty of doing mischief, and bound to make satisfaction to them he woundeth, than if he had aimed at some one person: so if we fling our bad words at random, which may light unluckily, and defame somebody, we become slanderers unawares, and before we think on it. This practice hath not ever all the malice of the worst slander, but it worketh often the effects thereof, and therefore doth incur its guilt and its punishment; especially it being commonly derived from ill temper, or from bad habit, which we are bound to watch over, to curb, and to correct. The tongue is a sharp and parlous weapon, which we are bound to keep up in the sheath, or never to draw forth but advisedly, and on just occa-

sion; it must ever be wielded with caution and care: to brandish it wantonly, to lay about with it blindly and furiously, to slash and smite therewith any that happeth to come in our way, doth argue malice or madness.

7. It is an ordinary way of proceeding to calumniate, for men, reflecting on some bad disposition in themselves, (although resulting from their own particular temper, from their bad principles, or from their ill custom,) to charge it presently on others; presuming others to be like themselves: like the wicked person in the psalm, 'Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.' This is to slander mankind first in the gross; then in retail, as occasion serveth, to asperse any man: this is the way of half-witted Machiavelians, and of desperate reprobates in wickedness, who, having prostituted their consciences to vice, for their own defence and solace, would shrowd themselves from blame under the shelter of common pravity and infirmity; accusing all men of that whereof they know themselves guilty.* But surely there can be no greater iniquity than this, that one man should undergo blame for the ill conscience of another.

These seem to be the chief kinds of slander, and most common ways of practising it. In which description the folly thereof doth, I suppose, so clearly shine, that no man can look thereon without loathing and despising it, as not only a very ugly, but a most foolish practice. No man surely can be wise, who will suffer himself to be defiled therewith. But to render its folly more apparent, we shall display it; declaring it to be extremely foolish on several accounts. But the doing this, in regard to your patience, we shall forbear at present.

* Remedium pœnæ suæ arbitrantur, si nemo sit sanctus, si omnibus detrahatur, si turba sit pereuntium, &c.—Hier. ad Asellam, Ep. xcix.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XVIII.

PROVERBS, CHAP. X.—VERSE 18.

In the second place the *folly* of slander is declared.

1. Slander is foolish, as sinful and wicked. All sin is foolish on many accounts, as proceeding from ignorance, error, vanity, &c. What can be more egregiously absurd than to dissent in our opinion and choice from infinite wisdom, to disoblige our best friend, on whom our all depends? If then this practice be proved extremely sinful, it will thence be demonstrated no less foolish; and that it is extremely sinful may easily be shown. It is so described in holy Scripture; it is that which gives to the grand fiend his *names*, and which best expresses his nature. To lie simply is a great fault, highly disagreeable to the *God of truth*; and of all lies those are the worst which proceed from malice, or vanity, or both; and which work mischief, such as slander does. Again, to bear hatred or ill-will, to exercise enmity towards any man, to design mischief against our neighbor, whose good, by many laws, and for many reasons, we are obliged to tender as our own, is a heinous fault; and of this the slanderer is apparently most guilty. All injustice is abominable: it is that crime which tends more immediately to the dissolution of society, and the disturbance of human life; which God therefore most loathes, and men have most reason to detest; but the slanderer violates all the rules of justice, and commits all sorts of wrong against his neighbor. He may perhaps conceive it no great matter if he does not act in a boisterous and bloody manner, but only by

means of words, which are subtile transient things, and on his neighbor's credit only, which is neither substantial nor visible: but we are not to estimate things by our fancy; we must not reckon that a trifle which he prizes as a jewel: moreover the injustice we commit is not to be corrected or cured: thefts may be restored and wounds healed; but a good name lost, cannot so easily be recovered. Nor is the thing itself contemptible; for as Solomon says, *a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches:* this point enlarged on.

2. But more particularly the slanderer is plainly a fool, because he makes wrong judgments and valuations of things, and accordingly drives silly bargains for himself, whereby he becomes a great loser. He means by his calumnies either to vent some passion boiling within him, or to compass some design, or to please some humor with which he is possessed; but is any of these things worth purchasing at so dear a rate? Can there be any fair exchange for our honesty? But the slanderer may pretend that it is not to assuage a private passion, or to promote his own concerns, that he deals thus with his neighbor; but for the sake of orthodox doctrine, or for the advancement of the public good; and in truth zeal for some opinion or some party is often the covert of innumerable slanders; but truth, equity, candor, and charity, are to be observed not only towards those who dissent from us in opinion, but even towards declared enemies of truth; for truth must ever support itself by fair means: this point enlarged on.

3. The slanderer is a fool, because he uses improper means and preposterous methods of effecting his purposes. As there is no design worth carrying on by ways of falsehood and iniquity, so there is scarcely any (at least any good or lawful one) which may not be more surely and cleverly achieved by means of truth and justice. He that has recourse to base means, and *maketh lies his refuge*, forfeits all hopes of God's assistance, and so cannot reasonably expect success.

4. The slanderer is a very fool, as bringing many great inconveniences and troubles on himself.

1. *A fool's mouth*, saith the wise man, *is his destruction, his lips are the snare of his soul;* and if any kind of speech be dangerous, this is certainly most so, for men will more easily pardon one who robs them of their goods, than the defamer of their good name.

2. Such an one is odious not only to the person immediately concerned, but generally to all men that observe his practice: so that the slanderer is reckoned a common enemy.

3. All wise, noble, ingenuous persons have an aversion to this practice, and cannot entertain it with any complacency: *a righteous man hateth lying.*

4. The slanderer banishes himself from all good conversation and company, or intruding becomes disgusting unto it.

5. He also derogates wholly from his own credit in all matters of discourse; for when he dares thus to injure his neighbor, who can trust him in any thing he speaks?

6. This practice is perpetually accompanied with troublesome companions, inward regret, self-condemnation, fear, and disquiet.

7. The consequence of it is commonly shameful disgrace, with an obligation to retract and render satisfaction; for seldom does calumny pass long without detection.

8. To this in all likelihood the concernments of men, and the powers that guard justice, will forcibly bring him; and certainly his conscience will bind him thereto; God will indispensably exact it from him.

9. This practice doth also certainly revenge itself, imposing on its actor a perfect retaliation; *a tooth for a tooth;* an irrevocable infamy to himself for the infamy which he has caused to others.

10. In fine, the slanderer (unless by serious repentance he retracts his practice) banishes himself from heaven and happi-

ness, exposes himself to endless miseries and sorrows: for St. Paul declares that *no railer* or evil-speaker *shall inherit the kingdom of God:* and if for *every idle* or vain *word* we must render a strict account, how much more so for such as are positively evil?

The nature of this sin, and the folly of it having been declared, much need not be said for dissuading it; especially to persons of a generous and honest mind: it may suffice to observe that, since our faculty of speech (in which we excel all other creatures) was given us, as in the first place to praise and glorify our Maker, so in the next to benefit, help, and delight our neighbor, it is an unnatural perversion and irrational abuse of it, to employ it for his damage or disgrace. Conclusion.

SERMON XVIII.

THE FOLLY OF SLANDER.

PROVERBS, CHAP. X.—VERSE 18.

He that uttereth slander is a fool.

I HAVE formerly in this place, discoursing on this text, explained the nature of the sin here condemned, with its several kinds and ways of practising.

II. I shall now proceed to declare the folly of it; and to make good by divers reasons the assertion of the wise man, that 'he who uttereth slander is a fool.'

1. Slandering is foolish, as sinful and wicked.

All sin is foolish on many accounts; as proceeding from ignorance, error, inconsiderateness, vanity; as implying weak judgment and irrational choice; as thwarting the dictates of reason and best rules of wisdom; as producing very mischievous effects to ourselves, bereaving us of the chief goods, and exposing us to the worst evils. What can be more egregiously absurd than to dissent in our opinion and discord in our choice from infinite wisdom; to provoke by our actions sovereign justice and immutable severity; to oppose almighty power, and offend immense goodness; to render ourselves unlike, and contrary in our doings, our disposition, our state, to absolute perfection and felicity? What can be more desperately wild than to disoblige our best friend, to forfeit his love and favor, to render him our enemy, who is our Lord and our Judge, on whose mere will and disposal all our subsistence, all our welfare does absolutely depend? What greater madness can be conceived than to de-

prive our minds of all true content here, and to separate our souls from eternal bliss hereafter; to gall our consciences now with sore remorse, and to engage ourselves for ever in remediless miseries? Such folly doth all sin include: whence in Scripture style worthily goodness and wisdom are terms equivalent; sin and folly do signify the same thing.

If thence this practice be proved extremely sinful, it will thence sufficiently be demonstrated no less foolish. And that it is extremely sinful may easily be showed. It is the character of the superlatively wicked man; 'Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit: thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.' It is indeed plainly the blackest and most hellish sin that can be; that which giveth the grand fiend his names, and most expresseth his nature. He is ὁ Διάβολος, 'the slanderer;' satan, the spiteful adversary; the old snake, or dragon, hissing out lies, and spitting forth venom of calumnious accusation; 'the accuser of the brethren,' a murderous, envious, malicious calumniator; 'the father of lies;' the grand defamer of God to man, of man to God, of one man to another. And highly wicked surely must that practice be, whereby we grow namesakes to him, conspire in proceeding with him, resemble his disposition and nature. It is a complication, a comprisal, a collection and sum of all wickedness; opposite to all the principal virtues, (to veracity and sincerity, to charity and justice,) transgressing all the great commandments, violating immediately and directly all the duties concerning our neighbor.

To lie simply is a great fault, being a deviation from that good rule which prescribeth truth in all our words; rendering us unlike and disagreeable to God, who is 'the God of truth;' (who loveth truth, and practiseth it in all his doings, who abominateth all falsehood;) including a treacherous breach of faith toward mankind; (we being all, in order to the maintenance of society, by an implicit compact, obliged by speech to declare our mind, to inform truly, and not to impose on our neighbor;) arguing pusillanimous timorousness and impotency of mind, a distrust in God's help, and diffidence in all good means to compass our designs; begetting deception and error, a foul and ill-favored brood: lying, I say, is on such accounts a sinful and

blameable thing: and of all lies those certainly are the worst which proceed from malice, or from vanity, or from both, and which work mischief; such as slanders are.

Again, to bear any hatred or ill-will, to exercise enmity toward any man, to design or procure any mischief to our neighbor, whom even Jews were commanded to 'love as themselves,' whose good, by many laws, and on divers scores, we are obliged to tender as our own, is a heinous fault; and of this apparently the slanderer is most guilty in the highest degree. For evidently true it is which the wise man affirmeth, 'a lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted with it;' there is no surer argument of extreme hatred; nothing but the height of ill-will can suggest this practice. The slanderer is an enemy, as the most fierce and outrageous, so the most base and unworthy that can be: he fighteth with the most perilous and most unlawful weapon, in the most furious and foul way that can be. His weapon is an envenomed 'arrow, full of deadly poison,' which 'he shooteth suddenly, and feareth not;' a weapon which by no force can be resisted, by no art declined, whose impression is altogether inevitable and unsustainable. It is a most insidious, most treacherous and cowardly way of fighting; wherein manifestly the weakest and basest spirits have extreme advantage, and may easily prevail against the bravest and worthiest: for no man of honor or honesty can in way of resistance or requital deign to use it, but must infallibly without repugnance be borne down thereby. By it the vile practiser achieveth the greatest mischief that can be. His words are, as the psalmist saith of Doeg, 'devouring words,' ('Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue:') and, 'A man,' saith the wise man, 'that beareth false witness against his neighbor is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow;' that is, he is a complicated instrument of all mischiefs: he smiteth and bruiseth like a 'maul,' he cutteth and pierceth like a 'sword,' he thus doth hurt near at hand; and at distance he woundeth like a 'sharp arrow;' it is hard anywhere to evade him, or to get out of his reach. 'Many, saith another wise man, the imitator of Solomon, 'have fallen by the edge of the sword; but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. Well is he that is defended from it, and hath not passed through the venom thereof; who hath not

drawn the yoke thereof, nor hath been bound in its bands. For the yoke thereof is a yoke of iron, and the bands thereof are bands of brass. The death thereof is an evil death, the grave were better than it.' Incurable are the wounds which the slanderer inflicteth, irreparable the damages which he causeth, indelible the marks which he leaveth. 'No balsam can heal the biting of a sycophant;' no thread can stitch up a good name torn by calumnious defamation; no soap is able to cleanse from the stains aspersed by a foul mouth. *Aliquid adhærebit;* somewhat always of suspicion and ill-opinion will stick in the minds of those who have given ear to slander. So extremely opposite is this practice unto the queen of virtues, charity. Its property indeed is, to 'believe all things,' that is, all things for the best, and to the advantage of our neighbor; not so much as to suspect any evil of him, without unavoidably manifest cause: how much more not to devise any falsehood against him? It covereth all things, studiously conniving at real defects, and concealing assured miscarriages: how much more not divulging imaginary or false scandals? It disposeth to seek and further any the least good concerning him: how much more will it hinder committing grievous outrage on his dearest good name?

Again, all injustice is abominable: to do any sort of wrong is a heinous crime; that crime, which of all most immediately tendeth to the dissolution of society, and disturbance of human life; which God therefore doth most loathe, and men have reason especially to detest. And of this the slanderer is most deeply guilty. 'A witness of Belial scorneth judgment, and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity,' saith the wise man. He is indeed, according to just estimation, guilty of all kinds whatever of injury, breaking all the second table of commands respecting our neighbor. Most formally and directly he 'beareth false witness against his neighbor:' he doth 'covet his neighbor's goods;' for 'tis constantly out of such an irregular desire, for his own presumed advantage, to dispossess his neighbor of some good, and transfer it on himself, that the slanderer uttereth his tale: he is ever a thief and robber of his good name, a deflowerer and defiler of his reputation, an assassin and murderer of his honor. So doth he violate all the

rules of justice, and perpetrateth all sorts of wrong against his neighbor.

He may indeed perhaps conceive it no great matter that he committeth; because he doth not act in so boisterous and bloody a way, but only by words, which are subtile, slim, and transient things; on his neighbor's credit only, which is no substantial or visible matter. He draweth, thinks he, no blood, nor breaketh any bones, nor impresseth any remarkable scar: 'tis only the soft air he breaketh with his tongue, 'tis only a slight character that he stampeth on the fancy, 'tis only an imaginary stain that he daubeth his neighbor with: therefore he supposeth no great wrong done, and seemeth to himself innocent, or very excusable. But these conceits arise from great inconsiderateness, or mistake; nor can they excuse the slanderer from grievous injustice. For in dealing with our neighbor, and meddling with his property, we are not to value things according to our fancy, but according to the price set on them by the owner: we must not reckon that a trifle, which he prizeth as a jewel. Since then all men (especially men of honor and honesty) do, from a necessary instinct of nature, estimate their good name beyond any of their goods, yea do commonly hold it more dear and precious than their very lives; we, by violently or fraudulently bereaving them of it, do them no less wrong, than if we should rob or cozen them of their substance, yea, than if we should maim their body, or spill their blood, or even stop their breath. If they as grievously feel it, and resent it as deeply, as they do any other outrage, the injury is really as great to them. Even the slanderer's own judgment and conscience might tell him so much: for they who most slight another's fame, are usually very tender of their own, and can with no patience endure that others should touch it: which demonstrates the inconsiderateness of their judgment, and the iniquity of their practice. It is an injustice not to be corrected or cured. Thefts may be restored, wounds may be cured; but there is no restitution or cure of a lost good name: it is therefore an irreparable injury.

Nor is the thing itself, in true judgment, contemptible; but in itself really very considerable. 'A good name,' saith Solomon himself, (no fool,) 'is rather to be chosen than great

riches; and loving favor rather than silver and gold.' In its consequences it is much more so; the chief interests of a man, the success of his affairs, his ability to do good, (for himself, his friends, his neighbor,) his safety, the best comforts and conveniences of his life, sometimes his life itself, depending thereon: so that whoever doth snatch or filch it from him, doth not only according to his opinion, and in moral value, but in real effect, commonly rob, sometimes murder, ever exceedingly wrong his neighbor. It is often the sole reward of a man's virtue and all the fruit of his industry; so that by depriving him of that, he is robbed of all his estate, and left stark naked of all, excepting a good conscience, which is beyond the reach of the world, and which nō malice or misfortune can divest him of. Full then of iniquity, full of uncharitableness, full of all wickedness is this practice; and consequently full it is of folly. No man, one would think, of any tolerable sense, should dare, or deign to incur the guilt of a practice so vile and base, so indeed diabolical and detestable. But farther more particularly,

2. The slanderer is plainly a fool; because he maketh wrong judgments and valuations of things, and accordingly driveth on silly bargains for himself, in result whereof he proveth a great loser. He means by his calumnious stories either to vent some passion boiling in him, or to compass some design which he affects, or to please some humor that he is possessed with: but is any of these things worth purchasing at so dear a rate? Can there be any valuable exchange for our honesty? Is it not more advisable to suppress our passion, or to let it evaporate otherwise, than to discharge it in so foul a way? Is it not better to let go a petty interest, than to further it by committing so notorious and heinous a sin; to let an ambitious project sink, than to buoy it up by such base means? Is it not wisdom rather to smother, or curb our humor, than by satisfying it thus to forfeit our innocence? Can any thing in the world be so considerable, that for its sake we should defile our souls by so foul a practice, making shipwreck of a good conscience, abandoning honor and honesty, incurring all the guilt and all the punishment due to so enormous a crime? Is it not far more wisdom, contentedly to see our neighbor to enjoy credit and success, to florish and thrive in the world,

than by such base courses to sully his reputation, to rifle him of his goods, to supplant or cross him in his affairs? We do really, when we think thus to depress him, and to climb up to wealth or credit by the ruins of his honor, but debase ourselves. Whatever comes of it, (whether he succeeds, or is disappointed therein,) assuredly he that useth such courses will himself be the greatest loser and deepest sufferer. 'Tis true which the wise man saith, 'the getting of treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death.' And, 'Woe unto them,' saith the prophet, 'that draw iniquity with cords of vanity;' that is, who by falsehood endeavor to compass unjust designs.

But it is not, perhaps he will pretend, for to assuage a private passion, or to promote his particular concernment, that he makes so bold with his neighbor, or deals so harshly with him; but for the sake of orthodox doctrine, for advantage of the true church, for the advancement of public good, he judgeth it expedient to asperse him. This indeed is the covert of innumerable slanders: zeal for some opinion, or some party, beareth out men of sectarian and factious spirits in such practices; they may do, they may say any thing for those fine ends. What is a little truth, what is any man's reputation, in comparison to the carrying on such brave designs? But (to omit that men do usually prevaricate in these cases; that it is not commonly for love of truth, but of themselves, not so much for the benefit of their sect, but for their own interest, that they calumniate) this plea will nowise justify such practice. For truth and sincerity, equity and candor, meekness and charity are inviolably to be observed, not only toward dissenters in opinion, but even toward declared enemies of truth itself; we are to 'bless them,' (that is, to speak well of them, and to wish well to them,) 'not to curse' them, (that is, not to reproach them, or to wish them ill, much less to belie them.) Truth also, as it cannot ever need, so doth it always loathe and scorn the patronage and the succor of lies; it is able to support and protect itself by fair means; it will not be killed on a pretence of saving it, or thrive by its own ruin. Nor indeed can any party be so much strengthened and underpropt, as it will be weakened and undermined, by such courses: no cause can stand firm on a

bottom so loose and slippery as falsehood is: all the good a slanderer can do is to disparage what he would maintain. In truth, no heresy can be worse than that would be, which should allow to play the devil in any case. He that can dispense with himself to slander a Jew or a Turk, doth in so doing render himself worse than either of them by profession are: for even they, and even Pagans themselves, disallow the practice of inhumanity and iniquity. All men by light of nature avow truth to be honorable, and faith to be indispensably observed. He doth not understand what it is to be Christian, or careth not to practice according thereto, who can find in his heart, in any case, on any pretence, to calumniate. In fine, to prostitute our conscience, or sacrifice our honesty, for any cause, to any interest whatever, can never be warrantable or wise. Farther,

3. The slanderer is a fool, because he useth improper means and preposterous methods of effecting his purposes. As there is no design worth the carrying on by ways of falsehood and iniquity; so is there scarce any (no good or lawful one at least) which may not more surely, more safely, more cleverly be achieved by means of truth and justice. Is not always the straight way more short than the oblique and crooked? Is not the plain way more easy than the rough and cragged? Is not the fair way more pleasant and passable than the foul? Is it not better to walk in paths that are open and allowed, than in those that are shut up and prohibited? than to clamber over walls, to break through fences, to trespass on inclosures? Surely yes: 'he that walketh uprightly walketh surely.' Using strict veracity and integrity, candor and equity, is the best method of accomplishing good designs. Our own industry, good use of the parts and faculties God hath given us, embracing fair opportunies, God's blessing and providence, are sufficient means to rely on for procuring, in an honest way, whatever is convenient for us. These are ways approved, and amiable to all men; they procure the best friends, and fewest enemies; they afford to the practiser a cheerful courage, and good hope; they meet with less disappointment, and have no regret or shame attending them. He that hath recourse to the other base means, and 'maketh lies his refuge,' as he renoun-

ceth all just and honest means, as he disclaimeth all hope in God's assistance, and forfeiteth all pretence to his blessing; so he cannot reasonably expect good success, or be satisfied in any undertaking. The supplanting way indeed seems the most curt and compendious way of bringing about dishonest or dishonorable designs: but as a good design is certainly dishonored thereby, so is it apt thence to be defeated; it raising up enemies and obstacles, yielding advantages to whoever is disposed to cross us. As in trade it is notorious that the best course to thrive is by dealing squarely and truly; any fraud or cozenage appearing there doth overthrow a man's credit, and drive away custom from him: so in all other transactions, as he that dealeth justly and fairly will have his affairs proceed roundly, and shall find men ready to comply with him; so he that is observed to practice falsehood, will be declined by some, opposed by others, disliked by all: no man scarce willingly will have to do with him; he is commonly forced to stand out in business, as one that plays foul play.

4. Lastly, the slanderer is a very fool, as bringing many great inconveniences, troubles, and mischiefs on himself.

First, 'a fool's mouth,' saith the wise man, 'is his destruction, his lips are the snare of his soul:' and if any kind of speech is destructive and dangerous, then is this certainly most of all; for by no means can a man inflame so fierce anger, impress so stiff hatred, raise so deadly enmity against himself, and consequently so endanger his safety, ease, and welfare, as by this practice. Men can more easily indure, and sooner will forgive, any sort of abuse than this; they will rather pardon a robber of their goods, than a defamer of their good name.

Secondly, such a one indeed is not only odious to the person immediately concerned, but generally to all men that observe his practice, every man presently will be sensible how easily it may be his own case, how liable he may be to be thus abused, in a way against which there is no guard or defence. The slanderer therefore is apprehended a common enemy, dangerous to all men; and thence rendereth all men averse from him, and ready to cross him. Love and peace, tranquillity and security can only be maintained by innocent and true dealing: so the psalmist hath well taught us; 'What man is

he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.'

Thirdly, all wise, all noble, all ingenuous and honest persons have an aversation from this practice, and cannot entertain it with any acceptance or complacence. 'A righteous man hateth lying,' saith the wise man. It is only ill-natured and ill-nurtured, unworthy and naughty people, that are willing auditors or encouragers thereof. 'A wicked doer,' saith the wise man again, 'giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.' All love of truth, and regard to justice, and sense of humanity, all generosity and ingenuity, all charity and good-will to men, must be extinct in those who can with delight, or indeed with patience, lend an ear, or give any countenance to a slanderer: and is not he a very fool, who chooseth to displease the best, only soothing the worst of men?

Fourthly, the slanderer indeed doth banish himself from all conversation and company, or, intruding into it, becomes very disgustful thereto: for he worthily is not only looked on as an enemy to those whom he slandereth, but to those also on whom he obtrudeth his calumnious discourse. He not only wrongeth the former by the injury, but he mocketh the latter by the falsehood of his stories; implicitly charging his hearers with weakness and credulity, or with injustice and pravity.

Fifthly, he also derogateth wholly from his own credit, in all matters of discourse. For he that dareth thus to injure his neighbor, who can trust him in any thing he speaks? What will not he say to please his vile humor, or further his base interest? What (thinks any man) will he scruple or boggle at, who hath the heart in thus doing wrong and mischief to imitate the Devil? Farther,

Sixthly, this practice is perpetually haunted with most troublesome companions, inward regret and self-condemnation, fear and disquiet: the conscience of dealing so unworthily doth smite and rack him; he is ever in danger, and thence in fear to be discovered, and requited for it. Of these passions the manner of his behavior is a manifest indication: for men do seldom vent their slanderous reports openly and loudly, to the

face, or in the ear of those who are concerned in them; but do utter them in a low voice, in dark corners, out of sight and hearing, where they conceit themselves at present safe from being called to an account. 'Swords,' saith the psalmist of such persons, 'are in their lips: Who, say they, doth hear?' And, 'Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off,' saith David again, intimating the common manner of this practice. Calumny is like 'the plague, that walketh in darkness.' Hence appositely are the practisers thereof termed whisperers and backbiters: their heart suffers them not openly to avow, their conscience tells them they cannot fairly defend their practice. Again,

Seventhly, the consequent of this practice is commonly shameful disgrace, with an obligation to retract, and render satisfaction; for seldom doth calumny pass long without being detected and confuted. 'He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known:' and, 'The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying lip is but for a moment,' saith the great observer of things. And when the slanderer is disclosed, the slanderer is obliged to excuse, (that is, to palliate one lie with another, if he can do it,) or forced to recant, with much disgrace and extreme displeasure to himself: he is also many times constrained, with his loss and pain, to repair the mischief he hath done.

Eighthly, to this in likelihood the concernments of men, and the powers which guard justice, will forcibly bring him: and certainly his conscience will bind him thereto; God will indispensably exact it from him. He can never have any sound quiet in his mind, he can never expect pardon from heaven, without acknowleging his fault, repairing the wrong he hath done, restoring that good name of which he dispossessed his neighbor: for in this no less than in other cases conscience cannot be satisfied, remission will not be granted, except due restitution be performed; and of all restitutions this surely is the most difficult, most laborious, and most troublesome. It is nowise so hard to restore goods stolen or extorted, as to recover a good opinion lost, to wipe off aspersions cast on a man's name, to cure a wounded reputation: the most earnest and diligent endeavor can hardly ever effect this, or spread the plaster so far

as the sore hath reached. The slanderer therefore doth engage himself into great straits, incurring an obligation to repair an almost irreparable mischief.

Ninthly, this practice doth also certainly revenge itself, imposing on its actor a perfect retaliation; 'a tooth for a tooth;' an irrecoverable infamy to himself for the infamy he causeth to others. Who will regard his fame, who will be concerned to excuse his faults, who so outrageously abuseth the reputation of others? He suffereth justly, he is paid in his own coin, will any man think, who doth hear him reproached.

Tenthly, in fine, the slanderer (if he doth not by serious and sore repentance retract his practice) doth banish himself from heaven and happiness, doth expose himself to endless miseries and sorrows. For if none that 'maketh a lie shall enter into the heavenly city;' if without those mansions of joy and bliss every one must eternally abide 'that loveth or maketh a lie;' if, πᾶσι τοῖς ψευδέσι, to all liars their portion is assigned 'in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone;' then assuredly the capital liar, the slanderer, (who lieth most injuriously and mischievously,) shall be far excluded from felicity, and thrust down into the depth of that miserable place. If, as St. Paul saith, no railer, or evil-speaker, 'shall inherit the kingdom of God:' how far thence shall they be removed, who without any truth or justice do speak ill of and reproach their neighbor? If for every ἀργὸν ῥῆμα, idle or vain word we must render a strict account; how much more shall we be severely reckoned with for this sort of words, so empty of truth and void of equity; words that are not only negatively vain, or useless, but positively vain, as false, and spoken to bad purpose? If slander perhaps here may evade detection, or scape deserved punishment; yet infallibly hereafter, at the dreadful day, it shall be disclosed, irreversibly condemned, inevitably persecuted with condign reward of utter shame and sorrow.

Is not he then, he who, out of malignity, or vanity, to serve any design, or sooth any humor in himself or others, doth by committing this sin involve himself into all these great evils, both here and hereafter, a most desperate and deplorable fool?

Having thus described the nature of this sin, and declared the

folly thereof, we need, I suppose, to say no more for dissuading it; especially to persons of a generous and honest mind, who cannot but scorn to debase and defile themselves by so mean and vile a practice; or to those who seriously do profess Christianity, that is, the religion which peculiarly above all others prescribeth constant truth, strictest justice, and highest charity.

I shall only add, that since our faculty of speech (wherein we do excel all other creatures) was given us, as in the first place to praise and glorify our Maker, so in the next to benefit and help our neighbor; as an instrument of mutual succor and delectation, of friendly commerce and pleasant converse together; for instructing and advising, comforting and cheering one another; it is an unnatural perverting, and an irrational abuse thereof, to employ it to the damage, disgrace, vexation, or wrong in any kind of our brother. Better indeed had we been as brutes without its use, than we are, if so worse than brutishly we abuse it.

Finally, all these things being considered, we may, I think, reasonably conclude it most evidently true, that 'he which uttereth slander is a fool.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON XIX.

JAMES, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 11.

ONE half of our religion consists in charity towards our neighbor; and of that charity much the greater part seems exercised in speech. Meaning of the word καταλαλεῖν: in stricter acceptation it denotes that particular sort of obloquy which is called *detraction*, or *backbiting*: and so we may be allowed to understand it here.

The nature of this fault described: its difference from slander and reviling is, that it may be couched in truth and clothed in fair language: it is the fault (opposite to ingenuousness or candor) which out of a haughty disposition or design strives to disgrace worthy persons, or to disparage good actions, looking for blemishes and defects in them, and using care to pervert or misrepresent things to that purpose: farther observations on this head: to get a fuller understanding of it, some particular acts, wherein it is commonly exercised, are more distinctly considered.

1. A detractor is wont to represent persons and actions under the most disadvantageous light he can: there is no person so excellent, who is not by circumstances forced to omit some things which it would become him to do, if he were able; to perform some things lamely, and otherwise than he would wish; no action so worthy, but it may have some defect in matter or manner, incapable of redress; and he that represents such person or action, leaving out all excusing circumstances, gives a mean opinion of them, robbing them of their due value and commendation.

2. He is wont to misconstrue ambiguous words, or to misinterpret doubtful appearances of things.

3. He is accustomed to misname the qualities of persons or things, assigning bad appellations or epithets to good or indifferent qualities, calling a sober man sour, a cheerful man vain, a reserved man crafty, a modest man sullen, &c.

4. He imperfectly characterises persons, so as studiously to veil or faintly to disclose their virtues and good qualities; but he carefully exposes, and fully aggravates any defects or failings in them.

5. He is wont not to commend or allow any thing absolutely and clearly, but always interposes some objection, to which he would have it seem liable.

6. He is ready to suggest ill causes and principles, latent in the heart, of practices apparently good, ascribing what is well done to a bad disposition or a bad purpose.

7. He derogates from good actions by pretending to correct them, or to show better that might have been done in their room: see John xii. 5.

8. A detractor not regarding the general course of a man's conversation, which is conspicuously and clearly good, will attack some part of it, where its goodness is less discernible, and more subject to contest or blame.

9. In fine, the detractor brings forward suggestions of every thing anywise plausible or possible, that can serve to diminish the worth of a person, or the value of an action, which he would discountenance: such is the nature and way of detraction.

For dissuading men from its practice, the causes whence it proceeds are next considered.

I. 1. It proceeds from ill-nature and bad humor: 2. from pride, ambition, and inordinate self-love: 3. from envy: 4. from malicious revenge and spite: 5. from a sense of weakness or want of courage: 6. from an evil conscience: 7. from

bad and selfish designs, it being a common engine by which evil persons strive to compass their ends: such are its principles and causes.

II. It involves the following kinds of irregularity and depravity. 1. Injustice; a detractor caring not how he deals with his neighbor, and what wrong he does him: 2. uncharitableness; it being evident that the detractor does not love his neighbor, since *charity believeth every thing, hopeth every thing* to the advantage of its object: 3. impiety; for he that loves and reverences God, will acknowlege and approve his goodness, in bestowing excellent gifts and graces on his brethren; will be afraid to disavow or disgrace them, lest he rob God of the glory due to him: 4. it involves degenerate baseness, meanness of spirit, and want of good manners: 5. consequently detraction includes folly; for every unjust, uncharitable, impious, or base person is, as such, a fool; none of those qualities being consistent with wisdom. But the folly of this vice will farther appear, from the bad effects which it produces both to others and to him who uses it.

III. The practice of it is a great discouragement and obstruction to the common practice of goodness; for many, when they see virtue thus disparaged, are deterred from pursuing it: this topic enlarged on: 2. hence detraction is very noxious and baneful to society; for all society is maintained in welfare by the encouragement of honesty and industry; the which, when disparagement is cast on them, will be in danger of languishing and decaying: 3. it works real damage and mischief to our neighbor, bereaving him of that good reputation which is the reward of virtue: 4. the detractor abuses those into whose ears he instils his poisonous suggestions, engaging them to participate in the injuries done to worth and virtue: 5. he produces great inconveniences and mischiefs to himself, raising up against himself animosity and general hatred: 6. he also yields occasion to others and a kind of right to return the same measure

to him: 7. again the detractor, according to moral possibility, will assuredly be defeated in his aims: his detraction in the end will bring shame and trouble on himself. Such are the natural and obvious effects of this practice: one more consideration only is subjoined, and that suggested by the text. *Speak not evil of one another*, says the Apostle, *brethren*: this appellation therefore implies a strong argument to inforce the precept: for *brethren* are bound to love each other: this point enlarged on. Conclusion.

SERMON XIX.

AGAINST DETRACTION.

JAMES, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 11.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren.

ONE half of our religion consisteth in charity toward our neighbor; and of that charity much the greater part seemeth exercised in speech; for as speaking doth take up the greatest part of our life, (our quick and active mind continually venting its thoughts, and discharging its passions thereby; all our conversation and commerce passing through it, having a large influence on all our practice,) so speech commonly having our neighbor and his concernments for its objects, it is necessary that either most of our charity will be employed therein, or that by it we shall most offend against that great duty, together with its associates, justice and peace.

And all offences of this kind (which transgress charity, violate justice, or infringe peace) may perhaps be forbidden in this apostolical precept; for the word καταλαλεῖν, according to its origination, and according to some use, doth signify all kind of obloquy, and so may comprise slander, harsh censure, reviling, scoffing, and the like kinds of speaking against our neighbor; but in stricter acceptation, and according to peculiar use, it denoteth that particular sort of obloquy, which is called detraction, or backbiting; so therefore we may be allowed to understand it here; and accordingly I now mean to describe it, and to dissuade from its practice.

There is between this and the other chief sorts of obloquy

(slander, censuring and reviling) much affinity, yet there is some difference; for slander involveth an imputation of falsehood; reviling includeth bitter and foul language; but detraction may be couched in truth, and clothed in fair language; it is a poison often infused in sweet liquor, and ministered in a golden cup. It is of nearer kin to censuring, and accordingly St. James here coupleth it thereto: 'he that detracteth from a brother, and he that censureth his brother, backbiteth the law, and censureth the law:' yet may these two be distinguished; for censuring seemeth to be of more general purport, extending indifferently to all kinds of persons, qualities, and actions, which it unduly taxeth; but detraction especially respecteth worthy persons, good qualities, and laudable actions, the reputation of which it aimeth to destroy, or to impair.

This sort of ill practice, so rife in use, so base in its nature, so mischievous in its effects, it shall be my endeavor to describe, that we may know it; and to dissuade, that we may shun it.

It is the fault (opposite to that part of charity and goodness, which is called ingenuity or candor) which, out of naughty disposition or design, striveth to disgrace worthy persons, or to disparage good actions, looking for blemishes and defects in them, using care and artifice to pervert or misrepresent things to that purpose.

An honest and charitable mind disposeth us, when we see any man endued with good qualities, and pursuing a tenor of good practice, to esteem such a person, to commend him, to interpret what he doeth to the best, not to suspect any ill of him, or to seek any exception against him; it inclineth us, when we see any action materially good, to yield it simply due approbation and praise, without searching for, or surmising any defect in the cause or principle, whence it cometh, in the design or end to which it tendeth, in the way or manner of performing it. A good man would be sorry to have any good thing spoiled; as to find a crack in a fair building, a flaw in a fine jewel, a canker in a goodly flower, is grievous to any indifferent man; so would it be displeasing to him to observe defects

in a worthy person, or commendable action; he therefore will not easily entertain a suspicion of any such, he never will hunt for any. But, on the contrary, it is the property of a detractor, when he seeth a worthy person, whom he doth not affect, or whom he is concerned to wrong, to survey him throughly, and to sift all his actions, with intent to descry some failing, or any semblance of a fault, by which he may disparage him; when he vieweth any good action, he peereth into it, laboring to espy some pretence to derogate from the commendation apparently belonging to it. This in general is the nature of this fault. But we may get a fuller understanding of it, by considering more distinctly some particular acts wherein it is commonly exercised, or the several paths in which the detracting spirit treadeth; such are these following.

1. A detractor is wont to represent persons and actions under the most disadvantageous circumstances he can, setting out those which may cause them to appear odious or despicable, slipping over those which may commend or excuse them. There is no person so excellent, who is not by his circumstances forced to omit some things, which would become him to do, if he were able; to perform some things lamely, and otherwise than he would do, if he could reach it; no action so worthy, but may have some defect in matter, or manner, incapable of redress; and he that representeth such person or action, leaving out those excusing circumstances, doth tend to beget a bad or mean opinion of them, robbing them of their due value and commendation: thus to charge a man of not having done a good work, when he had not the power or opportunity to perform it, or is by cross accidents hindered from doing it according to his desire; to suggest the action was not done exactly, in the best season, in the rightest mode, in the most proper place, with expressions, looks, or gestures most convenient, these are tricks of a detractor; who when he cannot deny the metal to be good, and the stamp true, he clippeth it, and so would reject it from being current.

2. He is wont to misconstrue ambiguous words, or to misinterpret doubtful appearances of things: let a man speak never so well, or act never so fairly, yet a detractor will say his words

may bear this ill sense, his actions may tend to that bad purpose; we may therefore suspect his meaning, and cannot yield him a full approbation.

3. He is wont to misname the qualities of persons or things, assigning bad appellations or epithets to good or indifferent qualities: the names of virtue and vice do so nearly border in signification, that it is easy to transfer them from one to another, and to give the best quality a bad name. Thus by calling a sober man sour, a cheerful man vain, a conscientious man morose, a devout man superstitious, a free man prodigal, a frugal man sordid, an open man simple, a reserved man crafty, one that standeth on his honor and honesty proud, a kind man ambitiously popular, a modest man sullen, timorous, or stupid, is a very easy way to detract, and no man thereby can scape being disparaged.

4. He doth imperfectly characterise persons, so as studiously to veil or faintly to disclose their virtues and good qualities, but carefully to expose, and fully to aggravate or amplify any defects or failings in them. The detractor will pretend to give a character of his neighbor, but in so doing he stifleth what may commend him, and blazoneth what may disgrace him; like an envious painter he hideth, or in dusky colors shadoweth, all the graceful parts and goodly features, but setteth out all blemishes in the briskest light and most open view. Every face hath in it some mole, spot, or wrinkle; there is no man that hath not, as they speak, some blind place, some blemishes in his nature or temper, some faults contracted by education or custom, somewhat amiss proceeding from ignorance, or misapprehension of things: these (although they be in themselves small and inconsiderable, although they are some of them involuntary, and thence inculpable, although they be much corrected or restrained by virtuous discipline, although they are compensated by greater virtues, yet these) the detractor snatcheth, mouldeth, and out of them frameth an idea of his neighbor, apt to breed hatred or contempt of him in an unwary spectator; whereas were charity, were equity, were humanity to draw the person, it, representing his qualities with just advantage, would render him lovely and venerable.

5. He is wont not to commend or allow any thing absolutely

and clearly, but always interposing some exception, to which he would have it seem liable: the man indeed, saith he, doth seem to have this or that laudable quality; the action hath a fair appearance, but then if he can, he blurteth out some spiteful objection; if he can find nothing colorable to say against it, yet he will seem to know and to suppress somewhat; but, saith he, I know what I know, I know more than I'll say;—so (adding perhaps a crafty nod or shrug, a malicious sneer or smile) he thinks to blast the fairest performance.

6. He is ready to suggest ill causes and principles, latent in the heart, of practices apparently good; ascribing what is well done to bad disposition, or bad purpose: so to say of a liberal man, that he is so from an ambitious temper, or out of a vainglorious design; of a religious man, that his constant exercises of devotion proceed not from a conscientious love and fear of God, or out of intention to please God and work out his salvation; but from hypocrisy, from affectation to gain the favor and good opinion of men, from design to promote worldly interests; this is the way of detraction. He doeth well, saith the detractor, it cannot be denied; but for what reason doeth he so? Is it not plainly his interest to do so? Doth he not mean to get applause or preferment thereby? 'Doth Job serve God for nought?' So said the father of detracting spirits.

7. He derogateth from good actions by pretending to correct them, or to show better that might have been done in their room: it is, saith he, done in some respect well, or tolerably; but it might have been done better, with as small trouble and cost: he was overseen in choosing this way, or proceeding in this manner. Thus did Judas blame the good woman, who anointed our Lord's feet; 'Why,' said he, 'was not this ointment sold, and given to the poor?' So did his covetous baseness prompt him to detract from that performance, of which our Saviour's goodness did pronounce, that it was a 'good work,' which should perpetually 'through the whole world' pass for memorable.

8. A detractor not regarding the general course and constant tenor of a man's conversation, which is conspicuously and clearly good, will attack some part of it, the goodness whereof

is less discernible, or more subject to contest and blame; as if in a body admirably handsome, one overlooking that curious harmony, that delicate complexion, those fine lineaments and goodly features, which, running through the whole, do conspire to render it a lovely spectacle, should pitch on an eye or a nose to carp at; or as if in a town, otherwhere begirt with impregnable defences, one should search for the weakest place, to form a battery against it.

9. In fine the detractor injecteth suggestions of every thing anywise plausible or possible, that can serve to diminish the worth of a person, or value of an action, which he would discountenance; he pryeth into every nook, he bolteth every circumstance, he improveth every pretence, he allegeth any report or rumor, he useth all the tricks imaginable to that end. Such is the nature and way of detraction; in enlarging on which I am the more sparing, because the arts and methods of detraction being in great part common with those of slander and censure, I have otherwhile in treating on those offences more fully declared them.

Now for dissuading from its practice, I shall propound to your consideration the causes whence it proceedeth, the irregularities and pravities which it involveth, the effects which it produceth; the which will appear so base and ugly, that whoever shall consider them cannot, I suppose, but loathe the daughter of such parents, the subject of such qualities, and the mother of such children.

I. The causes of detraction are,

1. Ill nature, and bad humor: as good nature and ingenuous disposition incline men to observe, like, and commend what appeareth best in our neighbor; so malignity of temper and heart prompteth to espy and catch at the worst: one, as a bee, gathereth honey out of any herb; the other, as a spider, sucketh poison out of the sweetest flower.

2. Pride, ambition, and inordinate self-love: the detractor would engross praise, and derive all glory to himself; he would be the chief, the only excellent person; therefore he would justle another's worth out of the way, that it may not endanger standing in competition with his, or lessening it by a partner-

ship; that it may not outshine his reputation, or dim it by the lustre thereof.

3. Envy: a detractor liketh not to see another thrive and florish in the good esteem of men, therefore he would gladly blast his worth and virtue; his eye is evil and sore, therefore would he quench, or cloud the light that dazzleth it.

4. Malicious revenge and spite: his neighbor's good practice condemneth his bad life; his neighbor's worth disparageth his unworthiness; this he conceiveth highly prejudicial to him; hence in revenge he will labor to vilify the worth and good works of his neighbor.

5. Sense of weakness, want of courage, or despondency of his own ability: he that in any kind deemeth himself able, or confideth in his own strength and industry, will allow to others the commendation beseeming their ability; for he thinking himself in capacity to deserve the same, and as he would not lose the fruits of his own deserts, so he taketh it for equitable that another should enjoy them; to deprive another of them he seeth were in consequence to prejudice his own capacity and hope: but he that feeleth himself destitute of worth, and despaireth to arrive to the credit of others, is thence tempted to disparage and defame such persons: this course he taketh as the best allay of his contemptibleness, the only solace for his defects that he can hope for; being he cannot arise to another's pitch, he would bring down that other to his; he cannot directly get any praise, therefore he would indirectly find excuse, by shrouding his unworthiness under the blame of others. Hence detraction is a sign of the weakest and basest spirit; it is an impotent and grovelling serpent, that lurketh in the hedge, waiting opportunity to bite the heel of any nobler creature that passeth by.

6. Evil conscience: a man that is conscious to himself of a solid worth and virtue, of having honest intentions, of having performed good deeds, is satisfied with the fruits of inward comfort and outward approbation, which they do yield; he therefore will scorn to seek the bettering himself by the discredit of others; he will not by so mean a practice adulterate that worth in which he feeleth sufficient complacence; he rather

doth like that others should enjoy their due commendation, as justifying his own claim thereto; he willingly payeth it, because he may justly demand it; and because withholding it from another may prejudice his own right thereto: but he that is sensible of no good qualities in himself, that is conscious of no worthy actions that he hath done, to breed a satisfaction of mind, or build a reputation on, would please himself in making others as little better than himself as he can, would ground a kind of credit on the ruins and rubbish of another's fame. When he knoweth he cannot shine by his own light, he would seem less obscure by eclipsing the brightness of others, and shutting out the day from about him; conceiving that all things look alike in the dark, and that bad appeareth not bad where no good is near.

As also a good man liketh worth and virtue, because they resemble what he discerneth in himself; so evil men hate them, because they do not find themselves masters of them; they are like the fox, who said the grapes were sour, because he could not reach them; and that the hare was dry meat, because he could not catch her. A detractor therefore is always a bad man, and wanteth those good qualities which he would disparage.

7. Bad, selfish design: detraction is a common engine, whereby naughty men strive to compass their ends; when by fair means, by their own wit, industry, courage, worthy behavior, they cannot promote their interests, they cannot drive on their ambitious or covetous projects, they cannot attain that preferment or that gain which they affect, then they betake themselves to this crooked and foul way of supplanting, by detracting those whom they conceit to stand in the way of their designs. It was the first piece of wicked policy that ever was practised in the world; the Devil, by detracting from the goodness and veracity of God, (misrepresenting his intentions, and misconstruing his commands,) strove to achieve his mischievous design of seducing our forefathers; and in his footsteps his serpentine progeny (the race of malicious, envious, ambitious, covetous, and crafty politicians) do tread. It is observed to be a fault that usually haunteth courts, wherein there is competition for the favor of a prince, and the conse-

quences thereof, (for dignity, power, wealth, repute,) to get which to themselves they strive to dispossess or prevent others by this instrument of detraction. It is also rife among scholars, that is, among competitors for wit, learning, industry, and the rewards of them, reputation or preferment. From such principles and causes usually doth this practice spring.

II. It doth involve these kinds of irregularity and pravity.

1. Injustice: a detractor careth not how he dealeth with his neighbor, what wrong he doeth him. Justice obligeth to render every man his due; 'honor to whom honor is due,' and praise to him that deserveth praise. There can be no greater injury done a man, than to spoil his best good, his virtue; than to rob him of the best reward of his pains and cares, which is a fair reputation; (I speak of rewards which lie in the reach of men.) No man prizes any thing comparably to his honesty and honor; who therefore by any means blurreth them is most injurious. 'Wo unto them—who take the righteousness of the righteous from him:' Isa. v. 23.

Injurious indeed he is not only to the virtuous person, but to virtue itself; for commendation is a debt we owe to it wherever it is found; which conduceth to its encouragement and advancement; and to wrong goodness itself is the most heinous injustice.

2. Uncharitableness: it is evident that the detractor doth not love his neighbor; for charity maketh the best of every thing: 'charity believeth every thing, hopeth every thing' to the advantage of its object; charity delighteth to see the beloved to prosper and florish; and will therefore contribute its endeavor to the procuring it to do so: the detractor therefore (who would defile the best, and display the worst in his neighbor) can have no charity; he indeed manifesteth the greatest hatred, seeing he striveth to do the greatest mischief, to cause the greatest vexation to his neighbor, in bereaving him of his most precious and dear enjoyments.

3. Impiety: he that loveth and reverenceth God, will acknowlege and approve his goodness, in bestowing excellent gifts and graces to his brethren; when such appear, he will be afraid to disavow or disgrace them, that he may not rob God himself of the glory thence due to his favor and mercy,

or through his neighbor's side wound the divine benignity: he will be ready to bless and praise God for all such emanations of his goodness; as those did in the gospel, who, beholding our Saviour's miraculous works of grace, did glorify God, who had given such gifts unto men; but the detractor careth not for that; he feareth not to bereave God of the honor of dispensing good gifts, that his brother may not have the honor of receiving them; he will rather deny God to be good, than allow a man to be so by his grace and blessing: so is he no less a detractor from God, than from his neighbor.

Hence, of all offences, detraction certainly must be most odious to God. He is the God of truth, and therefore detesteth lying, of which detraction ever, especially in moral esteem, hath a spice: he is the God of justice, and therefore especially doth abhor wronging the best persons and actions: he is the God of love, and therefore cannot but loathe this capital violation of charity: he is jealous of his glory, and cannot therefore endure it to be abused by slurring his good gifts and graces; he cannot but hate that offence, which approacheth to that most heinous and unpardonable sin, that consisteth in defaming the excellent works performed by divine power and goodness, ascribing them to bad causes.

4. Detraction involveth degenerous baseness, meanness of spirit, and want of good manners. All men affect to seem generous, and will say they scorn to be base; but generosity is in nothing more seen, than in a candid estimation of other men's virtues and good qualities: to this generosity of nature, generosity of education, generosity of principles and judgment, do all conspiringly dispose: it is the noblest kind of courtesy, to tender and further the reputation of others; to be liberal in bestowing commendation on deserving persons; it obligeth men more than any other benefit can do, procuring them commonly real advantage, always cheering and satisfying their mind; for in nothing more do they please themselves, than in reaping this fruit of their good intention and honest industry, the approbation of worthy men; it is therefore a most gentile thing thus to oblige men. But, on the other side, nothing more plainly argueth a degenerate and ignoble heart, ill-breeding and ill-formed manners, a sorry mind and poor judgment, than

to disesteem or disparage worth and virtue in others: it is the most savage rudeness, the most sordid illiberality, the most ugly clownishness that can be; of all men therefore it most doth misbecome those who pretend to be gentlemen.

5. In consequence to these things, detraction includeth folly; for every unjust, every uncharitable, every impious, every base person is, as such, a fool: none of those qualities are consistent with wisdom; but the folly of it will particularly appear, together with its pravity, by the bad and hurtful effects which it produceth, both in regard to others, and to him that practiseth it; some of which are these:

III. 1. The practice thereof is a great discouragement and obstruction to the common practice of goodness: for many, seeing the best men thus disparaged, and the best actions vilified, are disheartened and deterred from practising virtue, especially in a conspicuous and eminent degree. Why, will many a man say, shall I be strictly good, seeing goodness is so liable to be misused, seeing thereby I shall provoke the detracting tongue, seeing my reward shall be to have a severe inquisition pass on me, to have my life defaced, and my name bespattered? Had not I better be contented with a mediocrity and obscurity of goodness, than by a glaring lustre thereof to draw the envious eye, and kindle raging obloquy on me? Thus men of a weaker spirit, or a bashful temper (who are not stiff and resolute in their way, who have not the heart or the face to bear up against rude assaults of their reputation) will be scared and daunted by detraction; so as consequently to be induced,

——— placare invidiam virtute relicta.*

And when thus the credit of virtue is blasted in its practisers, many will be diverted from it; so will it grow out of request, and the world will be corrupted by these agents of the 'evil one.'

It were indeed on this consideration advisable and just, not to seem ever to detract; even not then when we are well assured that by speaking ill we shall not really do it; if we should discover any man to seem worthy, or to be so reputed,

* Hor.

whom yet we discern, by standing in a nearer light, not to be truly such, having had opportunity to know his bad qualities, bad purposes, or bad deeds; yet wisdom would commonly dictate, and goodness dispose not to mar his repute. If we should observe, without danger of mistake, any plausible action to be performed out of bad inclinations, principles, or designs; yet ordinarily in discretion and honesty we should let it pass with such commendation as its appearance may procure, rather than to slur it by venting our disadvantageous apprehensions about it: for it is no great harm that any man should enjoy undeserved commendation, or that a counterfeit worth should find a dissembled respect; it is but being over-just, which if it be ever a fault, can hardly be so in this case, wherein we do not expend any cost, or suffer any damage: but it may do mischief to blemish an appearance of virtue; it may be a wrong thereto to deface its very image; the very disclosing hypocrisy doth inflict a wound on goodness, and exposeth it to scandal; for bad men thence will be prone to infer that all virtue proceedeth from the like bad principles: so the disgrace cast on that which is spurious will redound to the prejudice of that which is most genuine: and if it be good to forbear detracting from that which is certainly false, much more is it so in regard to that which is possibly true; and far more still is it so in respect to that which is clear and sure.

2. Hence detraction is very noxious and baneful to all society; for all society is maintained in welfare by encouragement of honesty and industry; the which, when disparagement is cast on them, will be in danger to languish and decay: whence a detractor is the worst member that can be of a society; he is a very moth, a very canker therein.

3. Detraction worketh real damage and mischief to our neighbor; it bereaveth him of that goodly reputation which is the proper reward of virtue, and a main support to the practice of it; it often really obstructeth and disappointeth his undertakings, estranging those from him, or setting them against him, who do credulously entertain it.

4. The detractor abuseth those into whose ears he instilleth his poisonous suggestions, engaging them to partake in the injuries done to worth and virtue; causing them to entertain

unjust and uncharitable conceits, to practise unseemly and unworthy behavior toward good men.

5. The detractor produceth great inconveniences and mischiefs to himself.

He raiseth against himself fierce animosity and wrath: for men that are conscious to themselves of their own honest meaning and blameless proceedings, cannot endure to be abused by unjust disparagement; hence are they stirred to boil with passion, and to discharge revenge on the detractor.

He exposeth himself to general hatred; all good men loathe him as a base and mischievous person, and a particular enemy of theirs, always ready to wrong them; every man is apt to say, he that doth thus abuse another will be ready to serve me in like manner if I chance to come in his way, vilifying the best thing I can do: even the worst men will dislike him; for even such affect to do somewhat laudable or plausible, and would be glad to enjoy approbation for it; and cannot therefore brook those who lie in wait to rob them of the fruit of their good endeavors: so do all men worthily detest and shun the detractor, as a common enemy to goodness first, and then unto men. Farther,

6. The detractor yieldeth occasion to others, and a kind of right to return the same measure on him. If he hath in him a show of any thing laudable, men will not allow him any commendation from it: for why, conceive they, shall he receive that which he will not suffer others to enjoy? How can any man admit him to have any real worth or virtue in himself who doth not like it or treat it well in another? Hence, if a detractor hath any good in him, he much injureth himself, depriving himself of all the respect belonging thereto.

7. Again the detractor, esteeming things according to moral possibility, will assuredly be defeated in his aims; his detraction in the close will avail nothing, but to bring trouble and shame on himself: for God hath a particular care over innocence and goodness, so as not to let them finally to suffer: the 'good man's righteousness he will bring forth as the light, and his judgment as the noon day.' Wise men easily will discern the foul play, and will scorn it; good men ever will be ready to clear and vindicate the truth; worth, however clouded for a

time, will break through all mists, and gloriously expand itself, to the confusion of its most sly opposers.

Such are the natural and obvious effects of this practice; the consideration whereof (together with the causes producing it, and the essential adjuncts which it did involve) will, I should think, suffice to deter us from it.

I shall only adjoin one consideration, which our text suggesteth: 'Speak not evil of one another, brethren,' saith the Apostle: 'brethren;' that appellation doth imply a strong argument enforcing the precept: brethren, with especial tenderness of affection, should love one another, and delight in each other's good; they should tender the interest and honor of each other as their own; they should therefore by all means cherish and countenance virtue in one another, as that which promoteth the common welfare, which adorneth and illustrateth the dignity of their family. We should rejoice in the good qualities and worthy deeds of any Christian, as glorifying our common Father, as gracing our common profession, as edifying the common body, whereof we are members. 'Members we are one of another,' and as such should find complacence in the health and vigor of any part, from whence the whole doth receive benefit and comfort: for one brother to repine at the welfare, to malign the prosperity, to decry the merit, to destroy the reputation of another, is very unnatural; for one Christian anywise to wrong or prejudice another is highly impious.

To conclude: it is our duty (which equity, which ingenuity, which charity, which piety do all concurrently oblige us to,) whenever we do see any good person, or worthy deed, to yield hearty esteem, to pay due respect, gladly to congratulate the person, and willingly to commend the work; rendering withal thanks and praise for them to the 'donor of all good gifts:' unto whom, for all the good things bestowed on us, and on all his creatures, be for ever all glory and praise. Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XX.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSE 1.

PREVIOUS remarks on the precept in the text, its use and consequences: endeavor to describe the nature of the practice thus forbidden; declaration of its iniquity and folly.

Judge not. As to the word, though according to its primitive sense it is of a middle and indifferent signification, yet it is frequently used in Scripture in the worst sense, so as to import those acts or effects of judgment, which are to the disadvantage of those that are subjected to it: this sense may be given to the word here, though without excluding somewhat of the larger meaning. But for the clearer understanding of the matter, it must be observed that there are divers sorts of judging, or acts resembling judgment, which do not belong to this precept: these enumerated; as, 1. public judgment, or the administration of justice, is not here prohibited, without which society could not subsist: 2. neither trial and censure, although out of court, which superiors exercise over inferiors committed to their care: 3. nor paternal correption and friendly reproof, with charitable design and on clear grounds: 4. nor all observation and reflexion on our neighbor's actions, and expression of our opinion about them: 5. we are not hence obliged to think so well of all men, as without competent knowledge to rely on their pretences, and intrust our interest in their hands: 6. nor are we hence obliged, in contradiction to plain sense, to judge well of men, accounting him a good man whom we see living contrary to the rules of piety, justice, or sobriety.

These sorts of allowable judgment being excepted, it is pri-

vate, needless, groundless and harsh censure of persons or actions that is interdicted: nor can we perhaps better understand our duty in this matter, than by considering what are the properties and obligations of a judge, and comparing our practice thereto.

1. No judge should intrude himself into the office, or assume a judicial power without competent authority; in which condition we fail, when, without warrant from God, or special reason exacting it from us, we pry into and tax the actions of our neighbor: topic enlarged on.

2. A judge should be free from all prejudices and partial affections, especially such as incline him to condemnation: and if this rule were copied, there would be but little censuring, since few blame others without some preoccupation or disaffection towards them.

3. A judge should never proceed in judgment without a careful examination of the cause: this caution, as it excludes all rash judgment, would quietly diminish the practice pointed at in the text.

4. A judge should never pronounce final sentence but on good grounds, after certain proof, and on full conviction. If this rule were regarded, how many censures would be prevented?

5. Hence it is plainly consequent, that there are divers causes wholly exempted from our judgment, such as are the secret thoughts and purposes of men, not declared by words or overt acts; and this would prevent innumerable rash judgments.

6. Hence also it is not commonly allowable to judge concerning the state, present or final, of our neighbor in regard to God; and this, if duly considered, would cut off many hard thoughts and harsh words.

7. A judge should not undertake to proceed against any man, without warning and citing him to appear, nor without affording him competent liberty and opportunity to defend

himself: this would prevent many harsh judgments; for seldom do censurers charge men to their faces.

8. Moreover a judge is obliged to conform all his determinations to the settled rules of judgment, not according to his own private fancy or affection: the observing of which condition would smother many censures from those who reprehend persons for practices blameless, and perhaps commendable.

9. It is also to be supposed that a judge should be a person of good knowlege and ability, well skilled in the laws, endued with good measure of reason, &c.: the observation of this point therefore would draw many down from their usurped seats of judicature.

10. Again, it is proper for a judge not to make himself an accuser; and this also would diminish the trade of censuring.

11. He that pretends to judge others should himself be innocent, under no indictment, and not liable to condemnation: but we are all guilty of heinous crimes before God, and lie under the sentence of his law.

12. Lastly, it is the property of a good judge to proceed with great moderation, equity, candor, and mildness, as a friend not only to the public, but to the party accused. If this course were observed, innumerable causes, which now are severely judged, would never be mentioned or come under trial.

So much for the part explicative and directive: now for the persuasive; and to induce men to eschew this practice, its depravity and vanity is declared.

1. Censuring is an impious practice in regard to God, whose office we thus invade, and whose perfections we proudly arrogate to ourselves: moreover we are guilty of ingratitude towards him for his mercy, when we judge unfavorably of our brethren.

2. It is an unjust practice towards our neighbor, inasmuch as we meddle in affairs which do not belong to us, and draw

those under our jurisdiction who are not subject to it, *who have their own master to whom they must stand or fall*, &c.

3. It is an uncharitable practice, and so contrary to the principal duty of our religion: this topic enlarged on.

4. It is also a very foolish and vain practice, as arguing great ignorance and inconsiderateness, as producing great inconveniences and mischiefs.

5. Moreover this practice will produce many great inconveniences and mischiefs to ourselves.

1. We thereby provoke, and in some sort authorise others to requite us in the same kind: 2. we not only expose ourselves to censure, but implicitly pass it on ourselves: 3. we do by censuring others aggravate our own faults and deprive them of excuse or pardon: 4. indeed censuring others is an argument that we little mind our own case, or consider to what a dreadful judgment we are exposed: 5. nothing in fact causes us more to neglect our own case, nothing more engages us to leave our own faults unobserved and uncorrected than this humor: 6. hence it is that commonly the best men are the most candid and gentle, and they are most apt to blame others who deserve worse themselves: 7. in fine, the censorious humor, as it argues ill nature to be predominant, and as it signifies bad conscience, so it breeds and fosters such ill dispositions; it debauches the minds of men, rendering them dim and sluggish in apprehending their own faults, apt to please and comfort themselves in the evils, real or imaginary, of their neighbors. Conclusion.

SERMON XX.

AGAINST RASH CENSURING AND JUDGING.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII.—VERSE 1.

Judge not.

THESE words, being part of our Saviour's most divine sermon on the mount, contain a very short precept, but of vast use and consequence; the observance whereof would much conduce to the good of the world, and to the private quiet of each man: it interdicting a practice, which commonly produceth very mischievous and troublesome effects; a practice never rare among men, but now very rife; when, with the general causes, which ever did and ever will in some measure dispose men thereto, some special ones do concur, that powerfully incline to it.

There are innate to men an unjust pride, emboldening them to take on them beyond what belongeth to them, or doth become them; an excessive self-love, prompting them as to flatter themselves in their own conceit, so to undervalue others, and from vilifying their neighbors, to seek commendation to themselves; an envious malignity, which ever lusteth to be pampered with finding or making faults; many corrupt affections, springing from fleshly nature, which draw or drive men to this practice; so that in all ages it hath been very common, and never any profession hath been so much invaded, as that of the judge.

But divers peculiar causes have such an influence on our age, as more strongly to sway men thereto: there is a wonderful affectation to seem hugely wise and witty; and how can we seem such more than in putting on the garb and countenance of

judges; scanning and passing sentence on all persons and all things incident? There is an extreme niceness and delicacy of conceit, which maketh us apt to relish few things, and to distaste any thing; there are dissensions in opinion, and addictedness to parties, which do tempt us, and seem to authorise us in condemning all that differ from us; there is a deep corruption of mind and manners, which engageth men in their own defence to censure others, diverting the blame from home, and shrouding their own under the covert of other men's faults;* there are new principles of morality and policy become current with great vogue, which allow to do or say any thing subservient to our interests or designs; which also do represent all men so bad, that, admitting them true, nothing hardly can be said ill of any man beyond truth and justice.

Hence is the world become so extremely critical and censorious, that in many places the chief employment of men, and the main body of conversation is, if we mark it, taken up in judging;† every gossiping is, as it were, a court of justice; every seat becometh a tribunal; at every table standeth a bar, whereto all men are cited, whereat every man, as it happeneth, is arraigned and sentenced: no sublimity or sacredness of dignity, no integrity or innocence of life, no prudence or circumspection of demeanor can exempt any person from it: not one escapeth being taxed under some scandalous name, or odious character, one or other. Not only the outward actions and visible practices of men are judged; but their retired sentiments are brought under trial, their inward dispositions have a verdict passed on them, their final states are determined. Whole bodies of men are thus judged at once, and nothing it is in one breath to damn whole churches, at one push to throw down whole nations into the bottomless pit. All mankind in a lump is severely censured, as void of any real goodness or true virtue; so fatally depraved as not to be corrigible by any good discipline, not to be

* Expedit vobis neminem videri bonum; quasi aliena virtus exprobratio vestrorum delictorum sit.—Sen. de Vit. B. xix.

† Εἰς τὰ τῶν ἄλλων πολυπραγμονεῖν καὶ καταδικάζειν δαπανᾶται ἡμῶν ἅπας ὁ βίος· καὶ οὐδένα ἂν εὕροις ταχέως, οὐ βιωτικὸν ἄνδρα, οὐ μοναχὸν ταύτης ἐλεύθερον τῆς ἁμαρτίας, καίτοιγε τοσαύτης ἀπειλῆς κειμένης αὐτῷ.—Chrys. ad den. t. vi. Orat. 42.

recoverable even by the grace of God: yea God himself is hardly spared, his providence coming under the bold obloquy of those, who, as the psalmist speaketh of some in his time, whose race doth yet survive, 'speak loftily, and set their mouth against the heavens.'

This being too apparently the present state of things, and obvious practice of men, it were desirable that, in order to their being reclaimed, men commonly did well understand the nature of this practice, with the heinous guilt, and consequently the deadly hazard they do incur thereby: at this purpose my discourse shall aim, wherein I shall endeavor both to describe the nature of the practice forbidden in my text, and to declare the pravity, iniquity, and folly of it.

'Judge not.' As to the word, we may observe that it being in itself according to its primitive sense of a middle and indifferent signification, is yet frequently in the Scripture used in the worst sense: so as to import those acts or those effects of judgment, which pass to the disadvantage of the persons subjected thereto; for condemnation, and for infliction of punishment: and this sense here surely the word doth principally respect, yet not so precisely as to exclude somewhat contained in the larger sense: we are so prohibited the condemning and punishing our neighbor in his good name, that withal some acts antecedent or concomitant to those, are glanced at in the prohibition: undue application thereto, unjust proceeding therein are also signified unlawful; for the meaning of the word and the reason of the case may be so far extended.

But for the fuller and clearer understanding of the matter, we must observe that there are divers sorts of judging, or acts resembling judgment, which do not belong to this precept; which it is requisite to distinguish from this judging prohibited.

1. That exercising public judgment, or administering justice, is not here prohibited, I need not to insist, that is necessary; human society could not subsist, right could not be maintained, nor peace preserved without it; God thereby governeth the world, earthly judges being his instruments and substitutes; such judgment is not so much the act of men, as of God himself, by whose authority, in whose name, for whose service it is ministered. As Moses told the judges in his time, 'You shall

not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's.' And in numberless places of Scripture this judgment is allowed and authorised; it therefore is not touched here.

2. That trial and censure, although out of court, and without formal process, which any kind of superiors do exercise on their inferiors, committed to their inspection and care; such as of parents over children, masters over servants, pastors over their flock, any governors over their charge, their admonitions, reprehensions, and corrections are to be excepted hence, as being in themselves needful and warranted, yea enjoined by God.

3. Neither are fraternal correption or friendly reproof, proceeding out of charitable design, on clear ground, in fit season, within reasonable compass, concerned in this prohibition; this being a wholesome practice, and a duty incumbent on us: 'Thou shalt,' saith the law, 'not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin on him.'

4. All observing and reflecting on our neighbor's actions, all framing an opinion about them, and expressing our minds concerning them are not forbidden. For we are not bound perpetually to shut our eyes, or go about hood-winked; nor to stop our ears and make ourselves deaf; and how can we forbear to think according to plain evidence? how can we resist the impressions of sense on our minds? how can we contest notorious experience? how also, barring such apprehensions of obvious and apparent things, could we bear testimony concerning them? how could we signify our approbation or dislike of them? how could we for his amendment admonish or reprove our neighbor, as in some cases we are obliged to do?

5. We are not hence obliged to think so well of all men, as without competent knowlege always to rely on their pretences, or to intrust our interests in their hands; for common experience acquainteth us that we may be deceived in trusting men, prudence biddeth us in matters of importance not to confide in uncertainties; wherefore we shall not be culpable for being wary in such cases: this indeed is not a positive judgment, but only a waving to declare in favor, when sufficient ground of doing so doth not appear; it is only a reasonable suspecting the possibility of miscarriage in some persons, not a downright

asserting ill concerning any one man: wherefore to do it as it suiteth discretion, so it doth not thwart justice or charity; and cannot therefore be prohibited here.

6. We are also not hence obliged, in contradiction to plain sense, to judge well of men; accounting him for a saint, or a good man, whom we see living disorderly, or committing scandalous offences, plainly repugnant to the rules of piety, justice, or sobriety.

In fine, there are some special cases and circumstances wherein good men excusably may in severe terms declare their resentment of manifest wickedness, especially such as is prejudicial to God's honor and public good. Of this there are divers instances, which yet hardly can be reduced to common rules, or proposed for general example; the matter being ticklish, and men being apt to pervert any liberty or pretence of this kind, by indulging to their own bad humours and passions.

These sorts of allowable judgments being excepted, it is then private, affected, needless, groundless, rash, and harsh censuring the persons or actions of our brethren; such as doth resemble not the acting of a lawful superior, of a needful witness, of a faithful friend, but of a judge acting without competent right, on no good grounds, or in undue manner, which is here interdicted: the word 'judging' doth well imply the nature of this fault, the manner of our proceeding therein, the grounds of its unlawfulness; neither perhaps can we better understand our duty in this matter, than by expending what are the properties and obligations of a judge, and comparing our practice thereto; for thence it may plainly appear how unqualified we are to bear this office, and how unduly we execute it.

1. No judge should intrude himself into the office, or assume a judicial power without competent authority; that is, by delegation from superior powers, or by voluntary reference of the parties concerned. This condition we fail in, whenever without warrant from God, or special reason exacting it from us, we do pry into, scan, and tax the actions of our neighbor. When, I say, we are pragmatically inquisitive into the purposes and proceedings of our superiors, of our equals, of those who

are not subject to our charge and care, when we narrowly examine them, when we peremptorily blame them, then do we unduly exalt ourselves above them, and exercise an unwarrantable jurisdiction over them. What sense doth offer, we may receive in; what judgment reason doth extort, we may follow; what testimony public benefit requireth, we may yield; what expression charity doth call for toward our neighbor's edification, we may seasonably vent: but if we proceed farther in this way, the party concerned may appeal from us as incompetent and unlawful judges of his actions or his state; we are arrogant and injurious in presuming to exercise that office. God is the master and judge of men, and without authority from him, we must not presume to judge his servants and subjects: so we are tanght by St. Paul, 'Who,' saith he, 'art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth:' and St. James, in like manner, on the same ground, expostulateth with the censurer: 'There is,' saith he, 'one Lawgiver, who is able to save, or to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?' Our Lord himself for this reason declined intermeddling in the affairs of men; 'Who,' said he, 'made me a judge or divider over you?' And shall we constitute ourselves in the office, shall we seat ourselves on the tribunal, without any commission from God, or call from men? How many judges, if this proviso were observed, would have their quietus! how many censures would be voided hence!

2. A judge should be free from all prejudices, and all partial affections; especially from those which are disadvantageous to the party in danger to suffer; such as tempt or incline to condemn him; from ill-opinion and ill-will, from anger, envy, revengefulness, contempt, and the like: for he that is possessed with these, is nowise qualified to be a judge; his eyes are blinded, or distorted, or infected with bad tinctures, so that he cannot discern what is right, or that he seeth things represented in the wrong place, and under false colors; his mind is discomposed and disturbed, so that he cannot calmly and steadily apprehend or consider the just state of the case; his will is biassed, and strongly propendeth one way, so that he cannot proceed uprightly in a straight and even course: being not indifferently affected, but concerned on one side, he is become

a party, or an adversary, and thence unfit to be a judge; he hath determined the cause with himself beforehand, so that no place is left to farther discussion or defence; wherefore before such a judge the best cause will fall, the clearest innocence shall not preserve from condemnation. He therefore that will undertake this office must first divest himself of all prejudices, must rid himself of all passions, must purify himself from all corrupt inclinations, taking care not to come with a condemning mind, or a lust to punish the obnoxious party; otherwise a just exception lieth against him, and reasonably his jurisdiction may be declined.

If this rule were put in practice, there would be little censuring; for few come to it with a free and pure mind; few blame their neighbors without some preoccupation of judgment, or some disaffection toward them.

3. A judge should never proceed in judgment without careful examination of the cause, so as well to understand it. Even those, who out of indispensable duty, or by a just power, may call others to account, are yet obliged to be wary, and never to pass sentence without due cognisance of the cause; otherwise they will judge blindly and rashly; they will either decide wrongly, or so truly, that doing it must be imputed not to their virtue, but to their fortune; often they will be mistaken, and it is luck that they are not so always: and what plainer iniquity can there be, than that the reputation or real interest of any man should be put to the arbitrement of chance; that he should be defamed, or damnified, not for a certain fault, but from an unhappy lot? As things viewed at a distance appear much different in bigness, shape, and color, from what they are in nature and reality; so if we do not look nearly and narrowly, we shall greatly misapprehend the nature, the degrees, the right characters of things and of persons: then be our pretence to judge never so fair, yet our proceeding is unjust; then if we do unduly invade the place, it will be a great aggravation of our misdemeanor: if of our own head and pleasure we will constitute ourselves judges, yet at least we should act the judge's part, in patiently attending to, and heedfully sifting the cause: if we have not a stomach to hear, if we will not afford the care to mind what may be alleged in favor of the party concerned;

if we cannot, or will not scan every point and circumstance which may serve to acquit him, or to excuse and extenuate his guilt, why do we undertake to be his judges? why do we engage ourselves into the commission of so palpable injustice; yea, of so disgraceful folly? for 'he that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is,' saith the wise man, 'a folly and shame unto him.' This caution excludeth rash judgment, from which if men would abstain, there would be little censuring; for nothing is more ordinary than for men to do like those of whom St. Jude saith, Ὅσα οὐκ οἴδασι βλασφημοῦσι, 'they rail at what they know not;' they censure persons with whom they are not throughly acquainted, they condemn actions whereof they do not clearly ken the reasons; they little weigh the causes and circumstances which urge or force men to do things; they stand at great distance, and yet with great assurance and peremptoriness determine how things are, as if they did see through them, and knew them most exactly.

4. A judge should never pronounce final sentence, but *ex allegatis et probatis*, on good grounds, after certain proof, and on full conviction. Not any slight conjecture, or thin surmise; any idle report or weak pretence is sufficient to ground a condemnation on; the case should be irrefragably clear and sure before we determine on the worst side: 'Judge not,' saith our Lord, 'according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.' The Jews, seeing our Lord cure an infirm person on the sabbath day, presently on that semblance condemned him of violating the law; not considering either the sense of the law, or the nature of his performance; and this he termeth unrighteous judgment. Every accusation should be deemed null, until, both as to matter of fact, and in point of right, it be firmly proved true; it sufficeth not to presume it may be so; to say, it seemeth thus, doth not sound like the voice of a judge; otherwise seeing there never is wanting some color of accusation, every action being liable to some suspicion or sinister construction, no innocence could be secure, no person could escape condemnation; the reputation and interest of all men living would continually stand exposed to inevitable danger. It is a rule of equity and humanity, built on plain reason, that rather a nocent person should be permitted to escape,

than an innocent should be constrained to suffer: for the impunity of the one is but an inconvenience, the suffering of the other is wrong: the punishment of the guilty yieldeth only a remote probable benefit; the affliction of the blameless involveth a near certain mischief: wherefore it is more prudent and more righteous to absolve a man of whose guilt there are probable arguments, than to condemn any man on bare suspicions. And remarkable it is how God in the law did prescribe the manner of trial and judgment, even in the highest case, and most nearly touching himself, that of idolatry; 'If,' saith the law, Deut. xvii. 4. 'it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and behold it be true, and the thing certain, that such an abomination is wrought in Israel; then shalt thou bring forth that man, or that woman, and shalt stone them.' See what great caution is prescribed, what pregnant evidence is required in such cases; it is not enough that it be reported, or come to our ear; diligent inquiry must be made, it must be found true, it must appear certain, before we may proceed to condemn or execute; it is indeed not fair judgment, but mere calumny to condemn a man before he doth, by sufficient proof, appear guilty.

If this rule were regarded, how many censures would be prevented! For do not men catch at any shadow of a fault? Are they not ready on the least presumption to condemn their neighbor? Doth not any, even the weakest and vainest testimony, any wandering hearsay, or vulgar rumor, serve to ground the most heavy sentences?

5. From hence is plainly consequent, that there are divers causes wholly exempted from our judgment, and which in no case we must pretend to meddle with; such as are the secret thoughts, affections, and purposes of men, not expressed by plain words, nor declared by overt acts; for a capacity of judging doth ever suppose a power of cognisance; and it being impossible for us to reach the knowlege of those things, we cannot therefore pretend to judge of them. As it is the property of God to search the hearts and try the reins, so it is his prerogative to judge concerning the secret motions in them; the which we attempting to do, no less vainly and foolishly than presumptuously and profanely, do encroach on.

This point also being regarded, would prevent innumerable rash judgments; for men commonly do no less dive into the thoughts, and reprehend the inward dispositions and designs of their neighbor, than they do his most apparent and avowed actions; it is almost as ordinary to blame men for the invisible workings of their mind, as for their most visible deportment in conversation.

6. Hence also it is not commonly allowable to judge concerning the state, either present or final, of our neighbor in regard to God; so as to take him for a wicked man, or to denounce reprobation on him: for the state of men is not so much determined by single actions, as by a body of practice, or by a long course and tenor of life, compounded and complicated of actions in number and kind unconceivably various: it dependeth not only on external visible behavior, but on the practice of close retirements, and occult motions of soul; on the results of natural temper, on the influence of fortuitous circumstances; on many things indiscernible, inscrutable, and unaccountable to us; the which God alone can perceive and estimate throughly: 'God seeth not,' as he did himself tell Samuel, 'as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart: he searcheth our hearts, and understandeth our thoughts afar off: he compasseth our path, and is acquainted with all our ways: he weigheth our spirits; he knoweth our frame; he numbereth our steps;' he scanneth our designs, and poiseth all our circumstances exactly; he doth penetrate and consider many things transcending our reach, on which the true worth of persons and real merit of actions do depend: he therefore only can well judge of men's state. As a specious outside doth often cover inward hollowness and foulness, so under an unpromising appearance much solidity and sincerity of goodness may lodge; a dirty ground doth often contain good seeds within it: our judgment therefore in such cases is likely, at least in degree, to be fallacious and unjust; and therefore it is fit to supersede it, according to the advice and discourse of St. Paul; 'He that judgeth me is the Lord; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of

the heart: and then shall every man have praise (that is, a right estimate of his person and deeds) from God.'

If this were duly considered, many hard thoughts and many harsh words would be spared; men would not be so apt to damn those whom they have no skill to try.

7. Farther: a judge should not undertake to proceed against any man, without warning and citing him to appear, or without affording him competent liberty and opportunity to defend and justify himself. Judgment should not be administered clancularly, in dark corners, but in open court: not suspiciously, in a muttering or whispering way; but frankly, with a clear and audible voice: not on surprise, but with allowance of leisure and advice, that the party may be able to apprehend his case and manage his plea for his best defence: for it may justly be presumed, that as he is most concerned, so he is best acquainted with his own proceedings, and may allege reasons for them, which no man can so well perceive as himself; it is therefore fit that he should be heard before he is condemned, that he may not suffer wrong; at least that he may be convinced that he doth not, and that our proceeding may be cleared from misprision; that also the world may be satisfied of justice being done; and that likewise false accusers may be liable to due shame and chastisement. The manner of proceeding used by the Romans, and reported by Festus in St. Paul's case, was full of reason and equity: 'It is not,' said that governor, 'the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he, which is accused, have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself, concerning the crime laid against him.' Otherwise indeed any innocence may easily be oppressed irrecoverably, without any defence, and consequently without any means of evasion or redress. We should never yield both ears to the accuser, but reserve one for the accused. The end of justice, we may consider, is not to condemn, nor to work mischief to any one, but rather, so far as may be, to acquit and prevent evil to all; at least it aimeth to clear the truth, and state the case indifferently; wherefore it is just that all advantage that well can be, should be afforded to the obnoxious party for his justification and deliverance; at least that he be not denied equal advantage with his prosecutors;

humanity would allow him some favor; the most rigorous justice cannot refuse him leave to contest his cause on equal terms: wherefore it is fit that he should be acquainted with his case, that competent time and means should be afforded him to prepare for his defence, that his plea should receive, if not a favorable, yet a free audience: the contrary practice is indeed rather backbiting, whispering, supplanting, or sycophantry, than fair and lawful judging.

The observation of this rule would also cut off many censures; for seldom it is that our censurers do charge men to their faces, but rather take all possible care that what they say may never come to the ears of those whom they accuse; they fear nothing more than being confronted and detected; they decline the shame and the requital due to their sycophantic practice; which is a manifest argument of their foul dealing; and they no less in reality do thence condemn themselves than they would seem to condemn others.

8. Moreover, a judge is obliged to conform all his determinations to the settled rules of judgment, so as never to condemn any man for acting that which is enjoined, or approved, or permitted by them; he must not pronounce according to his private fancy, or particular affection, but according to the standing laws: which, as they are the only certain rules of moral action, the only grounds of obligation, the only standards of guilt and innocence; so in reason they should be the sole measures of judging: he that proceedeth otherwise is an arbitrary and a slippery judge; he incroacheth on the right and liberty of those with whom he meddleth, pronouncing them guilty whom God and reason do proclaim blameless. This is that which St. Paul doth reprove in the 14th to the Romans, and otherwhere. The case was this: some were of opinion, that abstaining from some kinds of meat, and observing some festival times, were matters of duty required by God; others thought it free to eat any thing, and to use any times alike: these, according to such their private opinions, did censure the practices of each other; one party condemned the other as transgressing duty, the other contemned them as weak in judgment: but the Apostle reproveth both as irregular in their behavior, in taxing one another for matters which on

both hands were indifferent; the divine law having clearly neither enjoined those observances, nor prohibited them; so that each man had a liberty to do, or to abstain, as he thought good, or most agreeable to his duty, and conducible to his salvation. So is it culpable in us to blame any man for doing that which is not repugnant to God's express command, or to the plain dictates of reason.

The observing this condition would smother many censures: for do we not commonly reprehend our neighbors for practices wholly blameless, perhaps commendable? Do we not sometimes grievously reproach them for not complying with our desires, for not serving our interests, for not jumping with our humors, for not dancing after our pipe; for dissenting from us in any conceit, although dubious or false; for discosting from our practice, although bad or inconvenient? Say we not ordinarily, he is morose, peevish, singular, rude, because he would not 'run with us into the same excess of riot;' he is weak, nice, superstitious, because he constantly and strictly adhereth to his duty; he is negligent, loose, profane, because he useth his liberty in some matters indifferent? Bar such matters of obloquy, into how narrow a compass would it be restrained!

9. Hence farther it is to be supposed that a judge should be a person of good knowlege and ability; well versed and skilful in the laws concerning matters under debate; endued with good measure of reason, enabling him as to sift and canvass matters of fact, so to compare them accurately with the rules of right: for nothing is more absurd than an ignorant and unskilful judge. Men therefore of weak capacity, of mean education, of small experience, are qualified to judge in few cases, most things being placed above their reach; such never should presume to censure actions, the worth or moral quality whereof depend on the stating and resolution of abstruse, intricate, or subtle questions. It is not therefore for mechanics or rustics to judge about difficulties of science, about controversies in religion, about mysteries of policy, or reasons of state; or to censure those who deal in them: in so doing they hugely trespass beyond their calling and sphere; they do strangely misbecome the bench, and will very untowardly misbehave themselves thereon; the decision of such matters is to be re-

served to those, who by study and experience have attained peculiar faculties to do it respectively.

Observing this point would draw many down from their usurped seats of judicature, and stop numberless vain sentences; we should have very few judges left, if all men would be so modest and so wise as not to meddle beyond their skill and ability.

10. Again: it is proper for a judge not to make himself an accuser; not to seek for misdemeanors, not to draw more causes under cognisance than are in course presented before him: he should rather judge as out of constraint than of choice; rather as sorry to find a necessity, than glad to snatch an occasion of condemning offenders. So should we rather decline than seek the office of censuring our brethren, rather conniving at and concealing their faults, than being forward to expose them; absolute reason only should induce or indispensable necessity force us thereto.

This also greatly would diminish the trade of censuring; for if we should never censure without great reason or necessity, how seldom should we do it? Do we not rather affect to do it causelessly and needlessly? Do we not eagerly search after and greedily embrace all occasions to do it? Is it not a pleasant entertainment to us, to be carping and cavilling at any body we meet, at any thing we see done? Farther,

11. He that pretendeth to judge others should himself be innocent; under no indictment, and not liable to condemnation. Is it not very improper for a criminal, for one who is not only in truth and in his own conscience guilty, but who standeth actually convicted of heinous offences, to sit on the bench, determining about the deeds and the states of others? It is the case of us all, we are all notoriously guilty of heinous crimes before God, we all do lie under the sentence of his law; we do all stand in need of pardon from our Judge, his mercy is our only hope and refuge: and shall we then pretend to be judges, or be passing sentence on our brethren? If only those who are free and guiltless should judge, who could undertake it? There would surely be no more than there appeared then, when in the case of the woman taken in adultery our

Lord propounded the like condition; 'Ο ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν, 'he that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her:' on which proposition the sequel was; 'And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even to the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst;' so infallibly should no man be allowed to judge, who were not himself void of like guilt, would every man escape censure.

12. Lastly: it is the property of a good judge to proceed with great moderation, equity, candor, and mildness; as a general friend, a friend to justice, to the public, to mankind, to the party impeached. As a friend to justice, he should be careful that the defendant receive no wrong in his credit or interest; as a lover of the public, he should wish that no offences or scandals be found; out of humanity he should desire that no man may incur the blemish of guilt, or pain of suffering; he should tender the party's case as compassionable, and desire that he may be delivered from the evil threatening him: this should render him willing to acquit and free the party, apt to apprehend and interpret all things favorably, ready to excuse and mollify the business what he can; far from picking faults out of obscure surmises or slender pretences, from aggravating the miscarriages that are detected, from stretching the blame farther than it will reach of itself, or making the case worse than it needs must be, from pronouncing a harsh or heavy sentence thereon. He should always be of council to the defendant, pleading his cause so far as truth and equity will permit; putting himself in his case, and thence nowise dealing with him more rigorously than he, according to impartial judgment, should in the like case deem it equal that himself should be dealt with: in fine, however the matter in the result appear to stand, he should avoid rigor and extremity, he should exercise clemency and mercy.

If this course were observed, innumerable causes, which now are severely judged, would never be mentioned, or come under trial, but would presently be cast out; many would soon, after small discussion, be voided; few would pass that extremity of

censure which now, by the cruel asperity of men, they are forced to undergo: for do we not accuse men for things that are no faults? Do we not exaggerate the guilt of petty faults? Do we not insult over great miscarriages with too unmerciful severity, as if they were incorrigible and unpardonable?

Seeing then few of us, according to those reasonable qualifications and conditions, are capable of being judges; seeing, if those equal rules were observed, most censures would be discarded; seeing hard it is for any man either warrantably to undertake, or uprightly to discharge this office; great reason there is for this precept, most fit it is that we should be forbidden to judge.

So much for the part explicative and directive; now for the persuasive; and for inducing us to eschew this practice, let us briefly declare the pravity and vanity of it; the performing which will, I suppose, be sufficient to dissuade and deter us from it. Be pleased only first to note that some considerations which we shall propound will be applicable to some kind of bad censure, some to another, according to the several defects and incapacities we have to judge lawfully, on the grounds already touched.

1. Censuring is an impious practice in regard to God.

By taking on ourselves to judge unduly, without authority, or beyond it, we do invade God's office, setting up ourselves as judges in his room: we usurp his right, exercising jurisdiction over his subjects, without order and licence from him: it is St. Paul's argument, 'Who art thou that judgest another's servant?' that is, how intolerably bold and arrogant, how sacrilegiously injurious and profane art thou, to climb up into God's tribunal, and thence to pronounce doom on his subjects?

By rash judgment in matters not subject to our cognisance, (as when we pronounce concerning the secret thoughts and intentions of men,) we proudly and perversely do arrogate to ourselves the incommunicable perfections of God, who alone can know such things, and determine rightly in such cases; who therefore hath reserved them to himself, commanding us 'to judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.'

By passing sentence about the state of our neighbor, we do

anticipate God's judgment, and by prejudging strive to frustrate it. We take on us to 'purge his floor,' to sever the chaff from the corn, and the tares from the wheat, to discriminate the goats from the sheep; which to perform will be the work of God's infinite wisdom and justice at 'the great day.'

By censuring our brethren causelessly, for not complying with our conceits, humors, or practices, we lay hold on and appropriate to ourselves God's legislative power; we subject his law to our fancy and pleasure; we in effect condemn his law of error and imperfection; we do at least make ourselves sharers with him in the enacting laws, and dispensing justice. 'He,' saith St. James, 'that speaketh against his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law:' that is, he opprobriously doth imply the law to be defective, until he doth complete or correct it; making it a guilt not to satisfy his will or conceit, beside the plain intent of the law; the dispensation of justice is not sufficient, unless he partake therein, taxing whom and why he pleaseth; God without him is not a perfect lawgiver or judge.

We are also very ingrateful in not being favorable towards our brethren in judgment; when as God is in his judgment so benign, patient, and merciful toward us, who is not 'extreme to mark what we do amiss;' is not forward to seek or find faults, but rather 'waiteth to be gracious,' hideth 'his face from our sins,' and 'passeth by our transgressions;' doth not aggravate our offences, but rather doth excuse them, 'remembering that we are flesh;' is not glad of occasion to punish, but 'delighteth in mercy,' and 'doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men;' is not severe, but 'punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve,' and 'in his wrath remembereth mercy.' And are we not impious if we do so ill requite him, and so little resemble him, in being rigorous and harsh toward our brethren, when they offend, or seem to do so?

In fine, censuring is impious, as involving the violation of those great commandments, of exercising in all our demeanor and dealing, humility, meekness, pity, and mercy toward our brethren; of pursuing and promoting peace among them.

2. Censuring, in respect to our neighbor, is an unjust practice. It is unjust to meddle in affairs with which we have no-

thing to do; to draw those persons under our jurisdiction who are not subject to it, but are liable to render their account at another bar; to punish those in their reputation or interest, over whom we have no just authority, 'who have their own master, to whom they must stand or fall.'

It is most unjust to judge any man without competent means of knowing, or skill to determine his case; to condemn him without diligent trial, without certain proof, without full conviction of his fault; to punish him without just cause, or beyond due measure.

It is very unjust to usurp an interest in the goods which are to our neighbor most proper and dear, his credit and concernments depend thereon, disposing of them as we please, to his disadvantage and prejudice.

It is also very unjust, whenas we do need the candid judgment, the forbearance and pardon of others for many things faulty and offensive that we commit, to refuse the like to others.

3. Censuring is also a very uncharitable practice, and so contrary to the principal duty of our religion: it is so eminently in all cases wherein it is unjust; for charity doth virtually contain justice, and transcendeth it; it is so peculiarly whenever it is harsh or rigorous, when it is affected, when it is needless or unprofitable; for charity disposeth us to be gentle, meek, patient, and merciful in all our dealings; it engages us to hide and smother, to diminish and excuse, to pass by and pardon offences: 'Charity seeketh no evil,' it 'covereth all things,' it 'beareth all things;' it tendereth our neighbor's good and advantage of all kinds, (his credit, his interest, his convenience, and pleasure;) it therefore will inflict no more evil than reason and necessity shall indispensably require.

A censurer is indeed unjust and uncharitable, not only toward those whom he censureth, but also toward those into whom thereby he doth infuse ill opinion and ill will toward their neighbor: he is guilty of their injustice and uncharitableness, a mischief more irreparable than his own.

4. Censuring is a very foolish and vain practice in manifold respects; as arguing great ignorance and inconsiderateness, as

producing grievous inconveniences and mischiefs, especially to the practiser of it.

It signifieth that we do not well understand or not well consider the natural impotency and frailty of mankind; how liable others are to mistake and slip, and how prone we ourselves are thereto; how, as St. James saith, 'in many things we offend all;' did we observe, or would weigh this, we should not be so forward to censure, or so vehement and bitter in it; we should see failing and tripping in many things to be a common case, rather demanding commiseration than censure.

It implieth also that we little consider how our escaping any faults, which our neighbor slippeth into, is nowise imputable to any worth or virtue in us, so much as the good providence and merciful grace of God, guarding or rescuing us from them; if we did apprehend and reflect on this, it would appear our duty rather to bless God for our being protected from miscarriages, than censoriously to insult over those who seem to fall into them. It signifieth we have no sight or sense of our own defects; for did we clearly see, did we humbly resent them, that would damp our heat and earnestness to censure. It declares a fond self-conceit, that we deem ourselves superior to our neighbor in wisdom, and less obnoxious to blame, and therefore fit to be his judges; whereas, according to a sober esteem of ourselves, we should appear more fit to stand at the bar than to sit on the bench; and should thence more dread the one than affect the other.

It showeth likewise that we do not rightly conceive the nature, or worthily esteem the consequences of this practice: we know not, or regard not, the value of our neighbor's reputation, which by censure we do mean to ruin or impair: we perhaps by no means would rob him of his substance, or of his life; yet we scruple not by grievous censure to bereave him of his good name; which he, the best prizer of his own goods, may esteem beyond his estate or his life itself: we think it nothing, or a slight matter to carp at him; but he feeleth it very painful, and deeply resenteth it.

It argueth in us an untamed fierceness of mind and discomposedness of passion, which can never consist or cohabit with

wisdom; for a well-ordered, calm, and free mind will be slow in conceiving offence or dislike, moderate in estimating things, reserved in expressing its sentiments, not easily transported into extremity or excess; it consequently hardly will suffer a man to break forth into rash or harsh censure. So many signs, and arguments of incogitancy and blindness this practice doth involve.

5. Farthermore, this practice will produce many great inconveniences and mischiefs to us.

1. We do thereby provoke, and in a sort authorise others to requite us in the same kind: for nothing more doth excite the indignation, doth inflame the anger, doth ingender the hatred of men toward us, than being pragmatical in finding fault, and hasty to censure their doings causelessly or immoderately; nothing seeming to them a more certain argument that we bear them ill will, or do contemn them; and if we so vex them, they will in requital be as ready, by finding or making faults in us, to vex and trouble us; it engageth their care, and quickeneth their industry, and whetteth their invention to observe or devise matter of recrimination. Men think it not only lawful, but even needful for them, in their own defence, to disparage the censurer, that his judgment may have the less weight to their prejudice: so that it will infallibly come on us, as our Lord warneth, using it as an argument to dissuade us from this practice, that, 'with what judgment we judge, we shall be judged; and with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again.' Men take it for allowable to retaliate in this way to the height, and stoutly to load the censorious man with censure.

2. We do by this practice not only expose ourselves to censure, but implicitly, and according to ready consequence, do pass it on ourselves, seeing we seldom, in kind or equivalently, are ourselves clear of that which we charge on others; with our own weapon of sharp censure, we through another's side do imprudently wound ourselves; and often, as David did in his parley with Nathan, adjudge ourselves to capital punishment; so that to any censorious person it may be said, in St. Paul's words, 'Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.'

3. We do by censuring others aggravate our own faults, and deprive them of excuse, and render ourselves uncapable of mercy and pardon: for of all men, he that is forward and prone to censure, who is rigorous and severe in judging others, deserveth no favor, nor can reasonably pretend thereto. 'Inexcusable,' saith St. Paul, 'art thou, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest;' for, 'thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?' and, Μὴ στενάζετε κατ' ἀλλήλων. 'Do not,' saith St. James, 'moanfully complain one against another, lest you be condemned;' and, 'He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy' in his judgment, saith the same Apostle. Which passages imply, that to be unmerciful in this kind, will expose us to the severity of judgment in regard to our offences; or, that if we deal harshly with our brethren now, God will then proceed the more severely toward us, when our great cause doth come under trial.

4. Indeed censuring others is an argument that we do little mind our own case, or consider to what a dreadful judgment we do stand obnoxious: did we think of that, we should see cause rather to employ our leisure and care in stating our own accounts, than in examining those of others; more advisable it would appear to mind our own case, than to busy ourselves in canvassing and determining the state of our neighbor, finding what great need our actions will have in that day of favorable construction and merciful allowance, we should become candid and mild in reflecting on the actions of others; we should not be forward to carp at any thing, we should scarce have the heart to condemn any man; this St. Paul seemeth to imply, when he thus argueth: 'Why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? We shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ:' that is, why do any of us judge others, seeing we must all be judged ourselves? It is not seemly, it is not expedient for those who soon must be arraigned, and put to answer for themselves, to be busy in questioning and prejudging others; but rather to spend their care and pains in preparing for their own account.

5. Nothing indeed more causeth us to neglect our own case,

nothing more engageth us to leave our own faults unobserved and uncorrected, than this humor. It is easy to observe that as they who are most sparing and gentle in censure are usually most exempt from blame, (for that carefully reflecting on their own infirmities and defects, spending their heat and activity of spirit on amending their own errors and faults, they have less time, less concernment, less mind to search out and scan the imperfections and misdemeanors of others; they do find less reason also, and therefore have less will to be fierce or severe toward them,) so the most censorious are usually the most stupid in discerning, and most careless in retrenching their own faults. And needs it must be so, for the actions of other men devour their leisure, take up the intention of their spirits, employ the keenness of their passions on them, so that they cannot and will not attend to themselves; they are so much abroad, they are so very busy otherwhere, that they little know or care what is done at home; while they are 'spying' and pulling out 'motes from their brother's eye,' they 'consider not the beam that is in their own eye,' although never so gross and obvious.

6. Hence, I say, it is that commonly the best men are the most candid and gentle, and they are most apt to blame others who deserve worse themselves; that the sharpest tongues and foulest lives do usually go together; that they who are the strictest judges of their own are the fairest interpreters of other men's actions; and they who will least pardon others do most excuse themselves; that they who are strangely acute in descrying other men's faults are stark blind in discerning their own. Our Saviour therefore chargeth such persons with hypocrisy; 'Thou hypocrite; first cast the beam out of thine own eye;' implying, that they do but falsely pretend a respect for goodness and zeal against sin, seeing in their own practice they indulge it; that it is indeed rather pride, peevishness, idleness, spleen, or selfish design that acteth them.

7. In fine, the censorious humor, as it argueth ill nature to be predominant, (a vulturous nature, which easily smelleth out, and hastily flieth toward, and greedily feedeth on carrion,) as it signifieth bad conscience; for he that knoweth evil of himself is most prone to suspect, and most quick to pronounce ill

concerning others, so it breedeth and fostereth such ill dispositions; it debaucheth the minds of men, rendering them dim and doltish in apprehending their own faults, negligent and heedless in regard to their own hearts and ways; apt to please and comfort themselves in the evils, real or imaginary, of their neighbors; which to do is a very barbarous and brutish practice.

These considerations may, I hope, suffice to persuade the observance of this precept, by the help of God's grace, to which I commend you, and conclude.

Now the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXI.

I THESSALONIANS, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 11.

IN the matter before us, duty and offence are on the confines of each other, and the difference is almost imperceptible. St. Paul here bids us to be studious of quiet; elsewhere he enjoins us to be earnestly active; here, to mind our own affairs; elsewhere, *to look not only to our own things, but also to the things of others:* Phil. ii. 4. Farther observations on this point. How then shall we reconcile these things? how, in the case before us, separate the bounds of duty and blame? It is difficult to do so precisely, and with distinctions that shall reach all cases. The endeavor however is made, and some rules and directions proposed for the regulation of our intercourse with others. First, the terms are considered in which the precept is couched.

Study: the word (φιλοτιμεῖσθαι) signifies to be ambitious, that is, to affect quiet with as much vehemency of desire as men are wont to pursue fame, dignity, and power.

To be quiet: this signifies not a physical but a moral rest; not a total forbearance of action, or drowsy listlessness, but a calm, regular, steady way of proceeding, within the bounds prescribed by justice, charity, and modesty.

To do our own business, signifies to do things proper and pertinent to us; things which suit our condition or vocation; whereby we may discharge our own duties, supply our own needs, and benefit, or at least avoid troubling others. The text therefore, as it implies an obligation lying on us to be industrious in our own calling, so it is chiefly designed to prohibit

our meddling with the concerns of others: but how to settle the limits of these two duties, is the difficult task to be encountered. The method observed is as follows: first, some cases are brought forward in which it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others; next some general rules are propounded, according to which such meddling is commonly blameable; then some directions are assigned which are proper to the chief and most obvious kinds of meddling; and, lastly, some considerations are offered to dissuade men from this pragmatical humor.

1. Superiors may intermeddle with the business of their inferiors, who are subject to their charge, in all matters relating to the needful execution of their office: instances of magistrates, parents, pastors, &c.

2. In any case wherein the honor of God is much concerned, we may interpose in vindication and maintenance of it: this enlarged on.

3. When the public weal and safety are manifestly concerned, we may also intermeddle to support or secure them: this also enlarged on.

4. We may also meddle for the succor of right against palpable outrage and wrong: for example, we may help an honest man against a thief, &c.: example of Moses, Acts vii. 24.

5. We may likewise meddle with the proceedings of others when our own just defence requires it: this is indeed but *doing our own business.*

6. When the life or welfare, either spiritual or temporal, of our neighbor is deeply concerned, and cannot be supported or relieved but by our aid, we may lawfully interpose to yield it: this enlarged on.

7. In fine, if any signal opportunity of doing our neighbor considerable good, especially to his soul, offers itself, we should even in charity embrace it; and we may then obtrude on him our direction and advice.

In these and like cases we may lawfully, and without offending, intermeddle: but we must even then take heed that our pretences be real and well grounded, that our proceedings be regular and fair, &c.

1. We should never, out of ambition, covetous desire, or self-conceit, so meddle as to invade any man's office, or to assume the exercise of it: instances given.

2. We should not, without call or allowance, meddle with our superiors, so as to advise or reprehend them, to blame or inveigh against their proceedings; for this is to confound the right order of things, &c.: and nothing is more usual in a busy and licentious age than for private men to invade the office, exercise the duties, and canvass or control the actions of their superiors: this topic considerably enlarged on.

3. We should not indeed so much as meddle with the affairs of our equals, who are not subject to our command and charge, so as to control or cross them; for this also is to usurp an undue authority.

4. We should not, without the desire or leave of parties concerned, intermeddle in the smaller temporal interests of others; for every man should be left to choose and manage his own affairs consistently with law and justice towards others.

5. We should not indeed ever, in matters of indifferent and innocent nature, so far meddle as, without reason or need, to infringe any man's liberty, cross his humor, or obstruct his pleasure, however discordant these may be to our judgment and palate.

6. We should never offer to put a force on any man's inclination, or strive to bend it to a compliance with our own; in attempting which we shall commonly be disappointed, and never come fairly off; for no man likes to be overborne with violence and importunity.

7. We should not in conversation meddle so as to impose our opinions and conceits on others.

8. Nor ordinarily in converse affect or undertake to teach.

9. We should be cautious of interrupting any man's discourse, or taking the words out of his mouth.

10. We should be careful of intrenching on any man's modesty in any way, either of commendation or dispraise, so as to put him to the blush, or expose him to scorn.

11. It is good to be very staunch and cautious of talking about other men and their concerns, in way of passing characters on them, or descanting on their proceedings, for want of other discourse; which is the common refuge of idleness, &c.

12. Farther, we should not be inquisitive into the designs of other people; for this, besides its vain curiosity and impertinence, is to assail their modesty, and cause disturbance both to them and ourselves.

13. We should not press into the retirement of men; it being unjust, as well as rude, to disturb any man in his lawful freedom and private satisfaction, to prevent him from enjoying his own thoughts, and meditating on his own concerns, &c.

14. We should not pry or peep into people's secrets, which is commonly impertinent curiosity, or gross injury.

15. We should not lie in wait to surprise or catch any man at an advantage, to overthrow him when he trips, to insult him on his mistakes or disasters, &c.

16. Lastly, we should never, at least with much earnestness, meddle with affairs more properly belonging to others, and which we do not, or may not pretend to understand so well as others; such are affairs out of our profession or calling, &c. Other considerations on this subject are reserved for the next discourse.

SERMON XXI.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

I THESSALONIANS, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 11.

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.

As frequently between neighboring states there do rise dissensions and contests about the just limits of their territories; so doth it frequently happen between virtue and vice, right and wrong, duty and miscarriage in practice; for although the extreme degrees, and even the middle regions of these things are very distant, yet the borders of them do lie very close together, and are in a manner contiguous; a certain ridge of separation running between them, which commonly, being very narrow, thin, and obscure, it is not easy to discern. So it particularly falleth out in the matter before us, wherein our text is concerned. Duty and offence do nearly confine, and almost indiscernibly differ one from the other: for there are about this case precepts which seem to contradict; there are duties appearing to thwart one another.

St. Paul here biddeth us to be studious or ambitious of quiet; otherwhere he injoineth us to be earnestly active, (to be σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροὶ, 'not slothful in business:') here he would have us to mind our own affairs; otherwhere he prescribeth that we should 'not look every man to his own things, but every man also to the things of others.'

According to the general drift of Scripture, and the tenor of our religion, we are in charity obliged to concern ourselves

heartily for the good of our neighbor, and to strive earnestly in promoting it; we are enjoined so far to interpose and meddle in the affairs of others, as to watch over them for their good; to instruct and advise them, to admonish and excite them, to check and reprove them on occasion; to offer and yield them succor, to compose differences between them; to promote their edification and peace: 'Let us,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works.' 'Let us,' saith St. Paul to the Romans, 'follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another;' and, 'Exhort yourselves together, and edify one another;—warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak,' saith he to the Thessalonians in this Epistle.

To be zealous and earnest in the maintenance and propagation of truth, of virtue, of piety, is a duty incumbent on us, which implieth care and activity concerning others; that we offer to instruct them; that we enter into contest with them; that we examine their words and actions; that we presume to tax and oppose them.

In fine; our religion doth seem by the bands of mutual relation, and obligations of charity, so to unite us together, so to endear us to one another, and to all men, that all things belonging to our brethren do nearly touch us, and should answerably affect us; so that by intermeddling with any thing relating to their welfare, we can hardly be said to meddle with what doth not concern us.

The condition of things also may seem to require that we so intermeddle; for the duties and affairs of men are so entangled or interwoven, that we can hardly prosecute any concernments of our own, without being engaged in the matters of others: in discharging all offices of society, in pursuance of any traffic or commerce, in all intercourse and conversation, while we transact our own business, we cannot avoid the furthering or obstructing the business of others, who are engaged in the same or contrary designs. Society doth subsist by combinations of care and pain, regarding common interests, so that it seemeth impossible so to mind our own business, as not to meddle with the business of others.

Yet notwithstanding St. Paul injoineth us so to affect quiet, as simply to mind our own business, or not to be meddlesome in the concernments of others; for that 'doing our own business' is meant exclusively to meddling with the affairs of others, is plain enough by the importance of τὰ ἴδια, which is emphatical, and signifieth only our own, or our proper business; and because it is joined with 'being quiet,' which respecteth others, and importeth not stirring beyond our own bounds; to be so meddlesome, being also a practice expressly condemned by St. Peter, in that prohibition, 'but let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as a malefactor, or as a busy-body in other men's matters:' where pragmaticalness is, we see, not only forbidden, but is coupled with the most heinous offences.

How then shall we reconcile these things? How shall we in the case sever between the bounds of duty and blame? It is indeed somewhat difficult to do it precisely, and with distinctions which shall reach all cases. But somewhat I shall endeavor toward it by propounding some rules and directions, which should commonly be observed in our dealing and intercourse with others: but first let us a little reflect on the terms in which the precept is couched.

'Study to be quiet.' 'Study;' the word is φιλοτιμεῖσθαι, which signifieth to be ambitious, that is, to affect quiet with the like vehemency of desire and care, as men are wont to pursue reputation, dignity, and power, the objects of ambition: the expression containeth a remarkable emphasis, or a grave acumen; for whereas ambition commonly doth prompt men to be restlessly busy, and engageth them in the concernments proper to others, St. Paul biddeth them to be ambitious the contrary way, in affecting quiet, and abstinence from other affairs beside their own.

'To be quiet:' this doth signify not a physical, but a moral rest; not a total forbearance of action; not a fastidious or drowsy listlessness to do any thing; not a senseless indifferency concerning the matters of others; not an absolute sequestering ourselves from common affairs: this is not quiet or tranquillity, the τὸ ἡσυχάζειν here, but a naughty sloth, stupidity, or savageness: the quiet here meant is opposed to disorderly motion, to

turbulency, to contention, to pragmatical curiosity, to all such exorbitant behavior, whereby the right of others is infringed, their peace disturbed, their just interest or welfare any wise prejudiced. This quiet is a calm, steady, regular way of proceeding, within the bounds and measures prescribed by reason, justice and charity, modesty and sobriety: such a motion as the heavenly bodies do keep, which so move that they seem ever to stand still, and never disturb one another: in fine, what a quiet is meant, the subsequent words and the context do show: it followeth,

And πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, 'to do our own business,' or to act things proper and pertinent to us; things which suit to our condition, our station, our vocation; whereby we may discharge our own duties, and supply our own needs; may work benefit to others, or however avoid being anywise burdensome or troublesome to them; an instance of which practice is immediately subjoined; 'to work with our own hands—that we may have lack of nothing;' in another place St. Paul calleth it μετὰ ἡσυχίας ἐργάζεσθαι, 'to work with quiet,' opposing it to περιεργάζεσθαι, being over-busy, or pragmatically curious, and to walking disorderly; that is, beyond the bounds of our calling, or the rules of our duty; so as to incroach on the rights, or molest the quiet of others.

The words then, as they do imply an obligation lying on us to be industrious in our own business, so they chiefly design to prohibit our meddling with the concernments of others; but how to settle the limits between this quiet minding our own business, and a culpable neglect of the duties concerning others; how to distinguish between meddling innocently, from being blameably meddlesome, *hic labor, hoc opus est;* this is that hard task which I am to undertake, but cannot hope thoroughly to perform. However, the method toward it, which I shall observe, is this: first, I shall touch some cases, in which it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others: then I shall propound some general rules, according to which such meddlesomeness is commonly blameable: in the next place, I shall assign some directions proper to some chief and most obvious kinds of meddling: and, lastly, offer some considerations to dissuade men from this pragmatical humor.

1. Superiors may intermeddle with the business of their inferiors, (that is, of such as are subject to their care and charge,) in all matters relating to the needful execution of their office. Magistrates may inspect the carriage, may examine the doings, may reprehend and punish the offences of their subjects: parents may advise, rebuke, and correct their children: spiritual guides and pastors may admonish and reprove their flock. These things, while with due prudence, equity, and moderation, they perform, they do indeed πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, 'do their own business;' it is their proper work, to which God hath designed them, and which reason exacteth of them; they are appointed, to use St. Paul's expression, 'to attend continually on this very thing;' their proceedings therefore are not to be charged with culpable pragmaticalness.

2. In any case, wherein the honor and interest of God is much concerned, we may interpose in vindication and maintenance of them. If any man dare to blaspheme God's name, we may and ought to stand up in its defence; if any man disparageth religion, we should strive to clear its repute; if any man impugneth any divine truth of moment, we should endeavor to assert it; if any man notoriously transgresseth God's law, we may discountenance his presumption, and reprove him for it: every man in such cases, as God's subject, hath not only a commission, but an obligation; is indeed by his allegiance bound to serve God in maintaining the honor and interest of his empire: it is foul disloyalty, it is pitiful baseness to forbear meddling in such cases. Thus have good men, without fear or shame, defended religion and truth against the mightiest powers and most dangerous oppositions that could be: thus 'stood up Phineas, and executed judgment,' not only checking, but avenging that heinous scandal: thus Elias maintained the true worship of God against all the corrupters of it, the kings and whole nation of Israel: thus the prophets did not forbear to tax the wicked manners of the princes, the priests, and the people in their times: thus St. John Baptist did not stick to reprove king Herod for his unlawful practice: so our Saviour censured the superstitious and hypocritical scribes, and he chastised the profaners of God's house: so, in fine, the

holy Apostles resolutely did assert God's truth against all the world.

3. When the public weal and safety are manifestly concerned, we may also intermeddle to support or secure them: so may we rebuke him that slandereth or reproacheth our prince; we may check him that would break the peace, we may impeach him that violateth the laws, conducing to public welfare: every man is a soldier against traitors and enemies of his country; every man is born with a commission to defend the public against those which plot its ruin or harm; every man is a party for his prince against rebels, for the church against schismatics, for the law against lawless transgressors, for common peace against those who outrageously disturb it: duty to our superiors, justice and charity to mankind, just regard to our own welfare, allow and oblige us to such meddling.

4. We may also meddle for the succor of right against palpable wrong and outrage: we may help an honest man against a thief assaulting him; we may guard the life of any man against an assassin; we may vindicate the reputation of an innocent person aspersed by a slanderous tongue; as Moses,—'seeing one of his brethren suffer wrong, defended him; and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian;' as the penitent thief rebuked his companion unjustly railing on our Saviour: the common interest of justice and charity do not only excuse, but commend meddling in such cases.

5. We may likewise meddle with the proceedings of others, when our own just defence requireth it: we may repel those who attack our safety or peace, who invade or rifle our goods, who traduce our good name; we may endeavor to defeat their plots, and to restrain their violence. This is indeed doing our own business; for to preserve our life with its conveniences and comforts, to maintain our right and just interest, to keep our honor and reputation clear from scandal, is incumbent on us: we are naturally the patrons, advocates, and guards of those considerable goods assigned or intrusted to us by Providence.

6. When the life or welfare, either spiritual or temporal, of

our neighbor is deeply concerned, and cannot otherwise than by our aid be supported or relieved, we may lawfully interpose to yield it: if we see him exposing his life to any great hazard, or engaging his soul into any great sin, we may in any fair way, (by admonition, advice, reproof, politic device, harmless force,) without any invitation or licence, with or against his will, presume to reclaim or restrain him. We may stop him in his career to ruin or grievous mischief, we may withhold him from running into a snare, or tumbling down a precipice, or drinking in poison; we may, as St. Jude speaketh, 'snatch him out of the fire.' In such cases we may reasonably suppose that our neighbor, being himself, will allow us to meddle, or will not be displeased therewith; if he hath not his wits about him, we may supply him with ours in such exigence: his present consent and approbation are not then requisite, he not being in condition to yield them; he needeth guardians, and opportunity constituteth us in that office: extreme and evident need will not only excuse the liberty we shall assume, but it obligeth us to use our power to save him; in case of neglect, that surly answer, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' will not serve our turn. We may, we should, it is not only innocent, but just and laudable for us to be watchful over our neighbor's concernment and deportment, if we do it out of pure charity, in a discreet, quiet, and gentle manner.

7. In fine, if any signal opportunity of doing our neighbor considerable good, especially to his soul, doth offer itself, we may lawfully, we should in charity embrace it: we may then even obtrude on him our direction and succor; if he be so blind as not to discern our good-will, so peevish as to dislike our proceeding, so ingrateful as not to thank us for our pains, yet our good intent will justify us before God, and at the bar of reason; and we have, to countenance us therein, the common example of good men, who, for doing thus, have worthily been accounted the friends and benefactors of mankind.

In these and the like cases we may, without offending, intermeddle; in doing so we may indeed truly be said to be quiet, and to do our own business; because there is no exorbitancy or disorder in such proceeding, because God's law and sound reason have appropriated these things to us, and made them

our concernment. There is no business more proper or pertinent to us than that wherein we labor to promote the glory of God, or to procure the good of men; this is the principal design of our being, and therefore employment therein cannot misbecome us: but we must however in such cases take heed that our pretences are real and well grounded, that our proceedings are regular and fair: we must not take or use such liberty maliciously; we must never, out of hypocritical pretence to the maintenance of God's honor, of public good, of justice, truth, or peace, be irregularly pragmatical or turbulent: this is to be doubly bad, adding to the irregularity of offence, the wickedness of fraud and malice.

1. We should never, out of ambition, covetous desire, or self-conceit, so meddle as to invade any man's office, or to assume the exercise of it. A private man should not presume to act the prince or the statesman, offering to control those who are not under him, to deliberate, debate, determine, or pass censure about political affairs or occurrences. A layman should not intrude himself to administer the sacred functions of authoritative teaching, of dispensing the sacraments, of exercising spiritual censures, of defining theological controversies, which are committed to the guides and pastors of the church. No man should set himself on the tribunal to judge, or undertake, without licence or invitation, to arbitrate the causes of others: doing thus is to incroach on God, and to usurp on man: we incroach on God, assuming to ourselves powers not derived from his order, and deserting the station assigned us by his providence: we usurp on man, exercising authority over him, which he is not bound to stoop unto.

2. We should not, without call or allowance, meddle with our superiors, so as to advise them, to reprehend them, to blame or inveigh against their proceedings: for this is to confound the right order of things, to trespass beyond the bounds of our calling and station, to do wrong, not only to them, but to the public, which is concerned in the upholding their power and respect: it is indeed a worse fault than assuming the ensigns of their dignity, or counterfeiting their stamps; for that is but to borrow the semblance, this is to enjoy the substance of their authority.

Nothing in this busy and licentious age is more usual than for private men to invade the office, to exercise the duties, to canvass and control the actions of their superiors; discussing what they ought to do, and prescribing laws to them; taxing what is done by them; murmuring at their decrees, and inveighing against their proceedings: every one is finding holes in the state, and picking quarrels with the conduct of political affairs: every one is reforming and settling the public according to models framed in his own conceit. Things, saith one, are out of order; the constitution is very defective, and ought to be corrected; such a law in all reason should be repealed, and such an one enacted; here our statesmen were out of their politics, and there our lawgivers failed in point of equity or prudence. No, clamors another no less eagerly, all things stand as well as can be; nothing can be amended, or ought to be altered; our establishment in all respects is more perfect than Plato's commonwealth, or the state of Utopia. Thus doth each man appoint himself counsellor of state, and turns legislator without any call from the king, or choice of the country: every one snatcheth at the sceptre, and invests himself with the senator's robe: every one acteth a prince and a bishop, or indeed is rather a censor and controller of both orders; not considering the wrong he committeth, nor the arrogance he practiseth, nor the mischiefs which naturally ensue on such demeanor: for to direct or to check governors is in effect to exauctorate or depose them, substituting ourselves in their room: and what greater injury can we do them or the public? To fix or reverse laws belongeth to the highest authority and deepest wisdom, which it is enormous presumption for us to arrogate to ourselves: by attempting such things we confound the ranks of men, and course of things; we ruffle the world, we supplant public tranquillity; and what greater mischief than this can we do among men?

It is the business and duty of those whom God hath constituted his representatives and ministers to deliberate and conclude what is to be done; and for the due performance of their charge they are accountable to their master, not to us: *nobis obsequii gloria relicta est;* our duty and our privilege (for so it is, if we could understand it, it being far more easy and safe)

it is to submit and obey with quiet and patience; if we do more, we are therein irregular, and no less undutiful to God than to our superiors; we forget those divine rules and precepts; 'Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say to him, What doest thou?' 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.' 'Do all things without murmurings and disputings.' We consider not what judgments are denounced on those whose character it is 'to despise government, to be presumptuous and self-willed, not to be afraid to speak evil of dignities.'

We do not weigh the nature of the things we meddle with, nor the advantages of the persons whom we tax, nor our own incapacity to judge rightly about them. There is a kind of sacredness in the mysteries of state: as the mysteries of faith do surpass natural reason, so do those of state transcend vulgar capacity: as priests by special grace are qualified best to understand the one, so are princes by like peculiar assistance enabled to penetrate the former. He that employeth them in that great work of governing the world, and maketh them instruments of his providence, is not wanting in affording to them direction and aid needful for the discharge of their duty; whence their judgments of things are somewhat more than human, and their words may with us pass for oracular; 'A divine sentence,' the wise king said, 'is in the lips of the king; his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.' According to the ordinary reason of things, they are best able to judge of such things, being, by reason of their eminent station, able to discern more and farther than others; having by experience and constant practice acquired a truer insight into things, and a better skill to manage them: whereas we being placed beneath in a valley, can have no good prospect on the grounds and causes of their resolutions and proceedings: we, for want of sufficient use and exercise, cannot skill to balance the contrary weights and reasons of things; to surmount the difficulties and rubs, to unfold the knots and intrigues, which occur in affairs of that kind; we cannot expect those special influences of light and strength from heaven towards judging of affairs, which do not properly concern us: wherefore we are altogether incompetent judges, and impertinent dealers about those things; it is great odds, that in

doing so we shall mistake and misbehave ourselves; we consequently do vainly and naughtily to meddle with them. If the love of public good doth transport us, let us restrain ourselves.

3. We should not indeed so much as meddle with the affairs of our equals, (those I mean not who do equal us in dignity or worth, but all such who are not subject to our command or charge, however otherwise inferior to us; those, I say, we should not meddle with,) so as to control or cross them; to direct, or check, or censure their proceedings against their will, or without special reason engaging us thereto: for this is also to usurp an undue authority, this argueth self-conceit, this containeth immodesty and arrogance.

4. We should not, without the desire or leave of parties concerned, intermeddle in the smaller temporal interests of others, on pretence to further them, or with design to cross them; for every man should be left to himself to choose and to manage his own business, prosecuting it in the method he best liketh, (consistent with law and justice toward others,) without interruption or control: every man hath a right to do so, every man desireth it, every man commonly hath a capacity sufficient for it; for each man is apt to study his own business, to weigh his case, to poise his abilities with the circumstances in which he standeth; and thence is likely to get righter notions concerning the state of his affairs, to descry better ways of accomplishing them, than others less regarding them can do: every man is best acquainted with his own humor and temper, and thence can pick his business, and wind the management of it, so that it shall comply with them, or not grate on them. However, as every man in point of interest and honor is most concerned in the success, and suffereth most by frustration of his endeavors, so it is equal that a free choice of his proceedings should be allowed him, without impediment or disturbance; which enjoying, he will more contentedly bear any disappointment that shall happen. This especially we say, in respect to matters of lesser consequence, (such as most worldly interests are,) by the ill success whereof our neighbor is not extremely damaged or hurt; for in such cases the immodesty and arrogancy of meddling, with the vexation and trouble it is apt to work, do com-

monly much outweigh any benefit we can presume by our meddling to procure.

5. We should not indeed ever in matters of indifferent and innocent nature so far meddle, as, without considerable reason or need, to infringe any man's liberty, to cross his humor, to obstruct his pleasure, however discordant these may be to our judgment and palate. Every man hath a particular gust for diet, for garb, for divertisements and disports, (arising from particular complexion, or other unaccountable causes,) and fit it is that he should satisfy it; it is enough that what he doeth seemeth good, and relisheth to himself: if we check him therein, we shall seem impertinent and troublesome, and therefore we shall really be so; for it is not our office to be tasters, to be dressers, to be masters of the sports to all men: we in such matters would please our own fancy, and therefore we should not about them offend others; it is incivility, it is injustice to do it.

6. We should never offer to put a force on any man's inclination, or strive to bend it unto a compliance with ours; in attempting that we shall commonly be disappointed, and we shall never come fairly off: for some are so tough, they will never yield to us; none will comply against the grain, without regret and displeasure: if you extort a compliance with your desire, you thereby do lose their good opinion and good will; for no man liketh to be overborne with violence or importunity.

7. We should not in conversation meddle so as to impose our opinions and conceits on others: in conversation with our equals, we have a liberty to propound our judgment, and declare our reasons for it; but if our judgment doth not take, nor our reasons persuade, we should have done; to press farther is rude, to be displeased for it is vain, to be angry or violent is unjust; for by the law of conversation every man taketh himself to have an absolute right to use and follow his own reason; and he that affects to deprive any man thereof, will pass for a petty tyrant, a clown, or an idiot. To retain the satisfaction which our own persuasion affordeth, is enough to content a just and sober mind, without triumphing over the understandings of others.

8. We should not ordinarily in converse affect or undertake

to teach; for this implies a pretence to a kind of superiority, and a preferring ourselves to others in wisdom; which argueth vanity, and is offensive to those with whom we converse, who care not to be dealt with as disciples or underlings. We may with our equals modestly dispute the case on even ground, as fellow-students of knowlege, or advocates of truth; but we must not peremptorily dictate, or pronounce with authority, like masters or judges.

9. We should indeed be cautious of interrupting any man's discourse, or of taking his words out of his mouth; for this is a rude way of dispossessing men of that which by common law of society they suppose themselves to enjoy, speaking their mind through, and perfecting their discourse; it is an implicit accusation of impertinency or weakness in their speech; it is an argument that we deem ourselves wiser than they, or able to speak more to the purpose: it is therefore an unsociable and distasteful practice.

10. We should be careful of intrenching on any man's modesty in any way, either of commendation or dispraise, so as to put him to the blush, or to expose him unto scorn. Sober men care not to be the subjects of talk; no man can endure to be the object of sport: we should not therefore thrust any man on the stage; it is vexatious, and therefore always discourteous, sometimes very injurious.

11. It is good to be very staunch and cautious of talking about other men and their concernments, in way of passing characters on them, or descanting on their proceedings for want of other discourse: this is the common refuge of idleness, and the practice of fiddling gossips, who, because they will do nothing themselves, must be reflecting on the doings of others; and that they may not say nothing, will talk impertinently; φλύαροι καὶ περίεργοι, St. Paul well coupleth together, that is, frivolous 'tatlers and busy-bodies;' 'and withal,' saith he of such gossiping women, 1 Tim. v. 13. 'they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.' To affect talking about others is indeed a great temptation to speaking things which we ought not to speak, words of unjust and uncharitable obloquy.

12. Farther; we should not be inquisitive into the designs of men; for this, beside the vain curiosity and impertinency of so doing, is to assail their modesty, and an adventure to vex both them and ourselves: thy neighbor perhaps, as most advised men are, is desirous to keep his purpose close to himself; then by inquiry thou either forcest him unwillingly to disclose what he would not, or to give thee a repulse, which he liketh not to do; and which whenever he doth, he is displeased: what is pumped out comes up against nature, and bringeth regret with it; and if we cannot get any thing out, we yet cause disturbance within; and ourselves are not well satisfied in the disappointment.

13. We should not press into the retirements of men; to do so is not only immodest and rude, but unjust: it is immodest to desire to know from any man what he is ashamed or unwilling to show: it is rude to disturb any man in the enjoyment of his lawful freedom, to interrupt him in his conversation with himself, to obstruct his private satisfactions: it is unjust to bereave a man of that leisure and opportunity which he possesseth, of doing that which he best liketh, and perhaps is greatly concerned in; of enjoying his own thoughts, of meditating on his concerns, of examining his ways, of composing his passions, of studying truth, of devotion and intercourse with his God, of contriving and carrying on in any wise the welfare of his own soul. Why doth he retire, but to shun diversion, or that he may be master of his time and thoughts? Why then are we so unkind, or so unjust, as to deprive him of those contents and advantages?

14. We should not pry or peep into men's secrets; it is a practice on many accounts blameable.

It is commonly impertinent curiosity; for men hide things, because they do not think others concerned to know them; the concealment argueth their opinion to be such, and consequently that he is fondly curious who would search into them: 'Why,' said he well to one, who, seeing him carry a basket covered, did ask what was in it, 'dost thou seek to know, when thou seest it covered, that thou mayest not know?'

It is foully discourteous, because offensively depriving men of the satisfaction they take in concealing their matters; en-

croaching on the innocent freedoms which they would enjoy, without rendering account to any; trespassing on their bashfulness, or frustrating their discretion; for therefore men choose to keep things close, because they like not, or judge it not expedient, to declare them. 'Take no heed unto all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee.'

It is also grossly injurious to deal thus; for it is a robbery of what is most dear to men; which they with more care reserve and guard, than they do their gold or their jewels: so that to break open the closet of a man's breast, to ransack his mind, to pilfer away his thoughts, his affections, his purposes, may well be deemed a worse sort of burglary or theft, than to break open doors, to rifle trunks, or to pick pockets.

It is a practice in the common opinion of men worthily esteemed very dishonest and treacherous; for men generally do suppose each other to be under a tacit but well-understood compact, obliged mutually (as they tender greatly the retaining their own secrets, so) to abstain from attempting to discover the secrets of others; to do otherwise is therefore taken for an act of perfidious enmity, and a violation of mutual confidence.

In fine, to peep into chinks, to listen at doors or windows, to mind whispers, to dive into letters and papers, and the like practices, are the practices of insidious eves-droppers, spies, and sycophants, which common humanity will not endure.

Yea, if the knowlege of what our neighbor would conceal doth casually arrive to us, it is advisable to smother it, it is inhumanity to reveal it to his prejudice. 'To reveal secrets' is a practice condemned in Scripture as odious and base. 'He that goeth about as a tale-bearer, revealeth secrets.' 'A tale-bearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.'

Not to take up, or scatter reports prejudicial. Ecclus. xix. 7. 10.

A wise man would not willingly anywise know the secrets of others, but gladly would shun them, although offering themselves to his knowlege; that he may be freed from the burden of keeping them, and the danger of venting them, to the distaste, wrong, or prejudice of others: and he is commended for

his discretion, who, to a prince asking him, 'What of his he should impart to him?' replied, 'Whatever you please, except your secrets.' Them he well thought unsafe to keep, and dangerous to utter. How foolish then is it voluntarily to intrude, or carefully to search into them!

15. We should not lie in wait to surprise or catch any man at advantage, to overthrow him when he trips, to insult on his mistake or his disaster; to do thus is always ill manners, it is sometimes barbarous inhumanity. Goodness in such cases would dispose a man to support, relieve, and comfort another, if he demandeth, or his case needeth such meddling.

16. Lastly; we should never, at least with much earnestness, meddle with affairs more properly belonging to others, and which we do not, or may not handsomely pretend to understand so well as others: such are affairs beside our profession, which if we understand not, it is a folly, in a peremptory manner, to treat of them; if we do understand them, it is yet undecent to contest or dictate about them, in the presence at least of those who profess them: thus should private men beware, at least in that magisterial or eager way, to meddle with political affairs, illiterate men with scholastical, laymen with theological, unexperienced men with any such matters, the comprehension whereof dependeth on skill and exercise: no man should be forward to meddle with things extraneous to his way and calling: doing so is wont to create much offence, it hath usually much immodesty and much folly in it; often it containeth much injustice.

These are some more general rules concerning the matter in hand: I should now, if time did permit, insist on some particular kinds of meddling, advice, reproof, interposing in contests; but, in regard to your patience, I shall proceed no farther at present.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXII.

I THESSALONIANS, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 11.

RECAPITULATION of considerations in the previous discourse.

III. Some directions now given concerning particular kinds of meddling.

I. As to meddling by *advice*, we may do well to observe these directions. 1. Advise not (except on call) a superior, or one more eminent than thyself in authority, dignity, or age: 2. thrust not with violence or importunity advice on an equal, or any man not subject to thy charge, who is unwilling to receive it: 3. be not obstinate in pressing advice: 4. affect not the office of a counsellor, except through friendship, humanity, or charity: 5. advise not otherwise than with reservation and diffidence.

II. For *reproof*, we may do well to pursue the directions which follow. 1. Reprove not a superior, which is to soar above our pitch, to confound ranks, and pervert the order of society: 2. reprove not rashly, and without certain cognisance of the fact: 3. neither rashly as to the point of right, or without being able to show that the affair is really culpable: 4. reprove not for slight matters, or such faults as proceed from natural frailty or inadvertency: 5. reprove not unseasonably, when a person is indisposed to bear rebuke: 6. but mildly and sweetly, in the calmest manner and gentlest terms: 7. neither affect to be reprehensive, or willingly to undertake the office of a censor.

III. Another kind of meddling is, *the interposing in con-*

tests and contentions of others: in this case the following rules ought to be observed. 1. We should never meddle, so as to raise dissensions, or to do such things as breed them: 2. we should not foment dissensions already commenced, blowing up the coals that are kindled, by abetting or aggravating strife: 3. especially we should not make ourselves parties in any faction, where both sides are eager and passionate: 4. nor interpose ourselves, without invitation, to be arbitrators in points of difference; though we may perhaps cautiously mediate, or advise agreement: 5. if we would at all meddle in these cases, it should be only by endeavoring to renew peace by the most fair and prudent means.

IV. Some considerations proposed, inducive to quietness, and dissuasive from a pragmatical temper. 1. Consider that quietness is just and equal, pragmaticalness is injurious to the rights and liberty of others: 2. quietness signifies humility, modesty, and sobriety of mind: 3. it is beneficial to the world, preserving the general order of things, and disposing men to keep within their proper station, &c.: 4. it preserves concord and amity: 5. quietness, to the person endued with it, or practising it, begets tranquillity and peace; since men are not apt to trouble him who comes in no one's way: 6. it is a decent and lovely thing, indicating a good disposition, and producing good effects: 7. it adorns any profession, bringing credit, respect, and love to the same: 8. quiet also is a safe practice, keeping men not only from the incumbrances of business, but from the hazards of it, and the charge of bad success; but pragmaticalness is dangerous from the opposite effects, &c.: 9. it is consequently a great point of discretion to be quiet, and a manifest folly to be pragmatical: 10. we may also consider that every man has sufficient business of his own to employ him, to exercise his mind, and to exhaust his labor; but those who attend pragmatically to the affairs of others, are apt to neglect their own: advice on this head from Scripture and

philosophy: 11. but suppose that we have much spare time, and want business, yet it is not advisable to meddle with that of other men; for there are many ways more innocent, pleasant, and advantageous to divert ourselves and satisfy curiosity: for instance, investigation of the works of nature; application to the study of the most noble sciences, to the history of past ages, and to the cultivation of literature in general. Concluding observations on the danger and trouble of a pragmatical disposition.

SERMON XXII.

OF QUIETNESS, AND DOING OUR OWN BUSINESS.

I THESSALONIANS, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 11.

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business.

In a former discourse on these words, I have already showed,

I. In what cases it is allowable or commendable to meddle with the affairs of others.

II. Next, I propounded some general rules concerning this matter, according to which we may discern in what cases meddling with the affairs of others is commonly blameable. Thus far I have proceeded.

III. I shall now give some directions concerning particular kinds of meddling. And because they are many, I shall at present only insist on three; (referring others to other occasions:) they are, advice, reproof, interposing in contests and contentions.

I. As to meddling in advice, we may do well to observe these directions.

1. Advise not (except on call) a superior, or one more eminent than thyself in authority, in dignity, or in age: for he that offereth to advise, doth thereby claim to himself a kind of superiority, or excellence, above another; and it is not well consistent with the reverence and respect due to our betters to seem to do so. They should be wiser than we; at least it becometh us not to declare we think they are not. If they ask advice, we may without presumption give it, supposing it to be not so much their defect of knowlege as prudent caution, which maketh

them willing to hear what any man can say to the case: but to obtrude it on them argueth we think them to need it, and ourselves able to direct them; which is presumption, and will pass for arrogance.

2. We should not indeed, with any violence or importunity, thrust advice on our equals, or on any man not subject to our charge, who is unwilling to receive it; for this is also an exalting ourselves in skill and wisdom above him, and implieth a contemptuous opinion concerning his knowlege; that he is so weak as to need advice, and yet more weak in not seeking it when needful from us; which practice consisteth not with modesty, and needs must breed offence: it is indeed unjust; for every man of right is to be allowed to act by his own advice, and to choose his own counsellors.

3. Be not obstinate in pressing advice: if he that asketh thy counsel do not like it, desist from urging farther, and rest content. If thou hast performed the part of a faithful friend, of a good man, of a charitable Christian, in advising what seemeth best to thee, that may abundantly satisfy thee; for the rest, *ipse viderit*, it is his concernment more than thine: if thou pretendest that he must follow thy advice, or art displeased because he doth not so, thou makest thyself a commander, not a counsellor; the which to appoint thee was beside his intention; he meant to seek thy help, not to forfeit his own liberty; and thou art not just in pretending to so much.

4. Affect not to be a counsellor, nor let any considerations, except of friendship, humanity, or charity, easily dispose thee to accept the office: it is not worth the while to undertake it as a matter of reputation, or because it seemeth to argue a good opinion concerning thy skill and ability; for it is a critical and dangerous thing to advise, because if the business succeedeth well according to thy advice, the principal usually carrieth away the profit and the praise; his judgment, his industry, his fortune are applauded; little commendation or benefit accrueth to the counsellor: but if it prosper not, the main weight of blame is surely laid on him that advised the course. If you, saith the party, and say the lookers on, had not thus directed, it had not thus fallen out.

5. Wherefore it is commonly expedient not to advise other-

wise than with reservation and diffidence: it is, we may say, the most probable course I know, but I question whether it will succeed; I hope well of it, but do not thoroughly confide therein. This modest and discreet way, whatever the event shall be, will shelter thee from blame; yea, will advance the reputation of thy sagacity: for if it fail, thy reason to suspect will be approved; if it prosper, the goodness of thy judgment will be applauded: whereas the confident director, if success crosseth his advice, is exclaimed on for his rashness; if success favoreth, he is not yet admired for his wisdom, because he seemed to be sure; it being more admirable to guess the best among doubtful things, than to determine that which is certain. So much for meddling about advice.

II. For reproof, (which is necessary, and a duty on some occasions,) we may do well to follow these directions.

1. Reprove not a superior; for it is exercising a power over him, and a punishing him; we thereby therefore do soar above our pitch, we confound ranks, and pervert the order settled among men; the practice containeth irreverence and presumption, it seemeth injurious, and is ever odious. What the ministers of God, or spiritual pastors, do in this kind, they do it by special commission, or instinct, (as the prophets in reprehending princes and priests, as St. John Baptist in reproving Herod;) or as ordinary superiors in the case of spiritual guidance, being set over us for that purpose, and 'watching for our souls,' for which 'they must render an account:' yet they must do it with great moderation and discretion: Πρεσβυτέρῳ μὴ ἐπιπλήξῃς, 'Rebuke not an elder,' (or one more aged than thyself,) 'but intreat him as a father,' (that is, advise him in the most respectful and gentle manner,) is the charge of St. Paul to B. Timothy. In case of grievance or scandal, it becometh inferiors not proudly or peremptorily to criminate and tax, but humbly to remonstrate and supplicate for redress.

2. Reprove not rashly, and without certain cognisance of the fact; for to reprove for things not done, or, which in moral reckoning is the same, for things not apparent, is both unjust, and argueth a malignant disposition: it is unjust to punish so much as the modesty of any man, without clear evidence and proof; it is malignity to suspect a man of ill, it is calumny to

charge blame on him on slender pretences, or doubtful surmises.

3. Reprove not also rashly as to the point of right, or without being able to convince the matter to be assuredly culpable: to reprove for things not bad, or not unquestionably such, (for things that are, or perhaps may be indifferent and innocent,) is also unjust, and signifieth a tyrannical disposition: it is unjust anywise to punish a man without clear warrant of law; it is tyrannical to impose on men our conceit, or to persecute them for using their liberty, following their judgment, or enjoying their humor; which in effect we do when we reprove them for that which we cannot prove blameable: it is, St. James saith, 'a judging the law,' or charging it with defect, when we condemn persons for things not prohibited by it: 'He,' saith the Apostle, 'that speaketh against his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law.'

Both these kinds of rash reproof are very inconvenient, as breeding needless offence and endless contention; for whoever is thus taxed will certainly take it ill, and will contend in his own defence: no man patiently, for no sufficient cause or sure ground, will lie under the stroke of reproof, which always smarteth, but then enrageth when it is supposed to be inflicted unjustly or maliciously: even those who contentedly will bear friendly reproof, can worse brook to be causelessly taxed.

4. Reprove not for slight matters; for such faults or defects as proceed from natural frailty, from inadvertency, from mistake in matters of small consequence; for it is hard to be just in such reproof; or so to temper it as not to exceed the measure of blame due to such faults: they occur so often, that we should never cease to be carping, if we do it on such occasions; it is not worth the while, it is not handsome to seem displeased with such little things; it is spending our artillery on a game not worth the killing. Reproof is too grave and stately a thing to be prostituted on so mean things; to use it on small cause derogateth from its weight, when there is considerable reason for it; friendship, charity, and humanity should cover such offences. In fine, it is unseemly to reprove men for such things as all men, as themselves, are so continually subject unto: it is

therefore better to let such things pass without any mark of displeasure or dislike.

5. Reprove not unseasonably; not when a person is indisposed to bear reproof, or unfit to profit thereby; not when there is likely to be no good effect come from it; when thou shalt only thereby conjure up an evil spirit of displeasure and enmity against thyself. Reproof is a thing of itself not good or pleasant, but sometimes needful, because wholesome and good in order to the end; it should therefore be administered as physic, then only when the patient is fit to receive it, and it may serve to correct his distemper; otherwise you will only make him more sick, and very angry.

It is ever almost unseasonable to reprove some persons, as scorners, impudent, incorrigibly profligate persons, who will hate the reprover without regarding the reproof: 'He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot.' 'Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.' To be maligned, to be derided, to be aspersed with reproach and slander, is all one shall get by reproving such persons; it is both prostituting good advice, and exposing oneself to mischief, as our Saviour intimateth in that prohibition: 'Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.'

As such men ever, so most men in some seasons are uncapable of reproof; so are men in calamity, who are discomposed by grief, the which is rather to be mitigated by comfort than increased and exasperated by blame; so are men in a passion, who have no ears to hear, no reason to judge, no will to comply with advice: reproof is apt to produce rather anger and ill-blood, than any contrition or kindly remorse in persons so affected.

It is also usually not seasonable to reprove men publicly, when their modesty is highly put to it, and their reputation grievously suffereth; for this is an extreme sort of punishment, and is taken for needless; it is extreme, because men had rather suffer any way than in their honor; it is deemed needless, because it may be ministered privately.

6. Reprove mildly and sweetly, in the calmest manner, in the gentlest terms; not in a haughty or imperious way, not hastily or fiercely; not with sour looks, or in bitter language; for these ways do beget all the evil, and hinder the best effects of reproof: they do certainly inflame and disturb the person reproved; they breed wrath, disdain, and hatred against the reprover; but do not so well enlighten the man to see his error, or affect him with kindly sense of his miscarriage, or dispose him to correct his fault: such reproofs look rather like the wounds and persecutions of enmity, than as remedies ministered by a friendly hand; they harden men with stomach and scorn to mend on such occasion. If reproof doth not savor of humanity, it signifieth nothing; it must be like a bitter pill wrapped in gold, and tempered with sugar, otherwise it will not go down, or work effectually.

7. Affect not to be reprehensive; seem not willingly to undertake the place of a reprover; appear to be merely drawn thereto by sense of duty, or exigency of friendship, or constraint of charity and good-will. For to affect reproving is a sign of ill-nature and arrogance, that we delight to observe the faults, that we love to insult on the infirmities and infelicities of other men; which is the part of a domineering and cruel humor. A truly good man indeed would be glad to be excused from the office; it is the most unpleasant thing he can do to be raking in men's sores, and causing smart to his neighbors; far more gladly would he be commending their good deeds, and cherishing their virtue. Nothing therefore but conscience and charity can put him on this employment. But so much for meddling in reproof.

III. Another kind of meddling is, interposing in the contests and contentions of others. As to this, we may, briefly, do well to observe these directions.

1. We should never meddle, so as to raise dissensions, or to do such things as breed them: we should by no means create misunderstandings, or distates, between our neighbors: we should not instil jealousies, or surmises; we should not misconstrue words or actions, to an offensive sense or consequence: we should not convey spiteful tales: we should not disclose the secrets of one to another. These practices engender enmity

and strife among men, and are therefore inhuman, or rather diabolical; for the Devil is the great makebate in the world.

2. We should not foment dissensions already commenced, blowing up the coals that are kindled, by abetting the strife, or aggravating the causes thereof; it is not good to strengthen the quarrel, by siding with one part, except that part be notoriously oppressed or abused: in such a case indeed, when justice calleth for them, we may lend our advice and assistance; and may bear the inconvenience of being engaged, as Moses honestly and generously did, when he succored his brother that suffered wrong; otherwise it is advisable to keep ourselves out of the fray, that we do not encourage it by our taking part, and involve ourselves in the mischiefs of it.

3. Especially we should not make ourselves parties in any faction, where both sides are eager and passionate; for then even they who have the juster cause are wont to do unjust things, in which it is hard for any man engaged not to have share, at least not to undergo the imputation of them: it is wisdom therefore in such cases to hold off, and to retain a kind of indifferency; to meddle with them is, as the wise man saith, to 'take a dog by the ears;' which he that doth, can hardly take care enough of his fingers.

4. We should not interpose ourselves (without invitation) to be arbitrators in points of difference; we may cautiously mediate, perhaps, or advise to agreement; but not pretend as judges with authority to decide the controversy: this savoreth of arrogance, this will work trouble to us, and bring the displeasure of both sides on us; it is hard, in doing so, to avoid becoming parties, and offending one side. Our Lord therefore did, we see, wave this office, and put off the invitation with a 'Who made me a divider, or a judge between you?'

5. If we would at all meddle in these cases, it should be only in endeavoring, by the most fair and prudent means, to renew peace, and reconcile the dissenters; if we can by exhortation and persuasion to peace, by removing misprisions, by representing things handsomely, by mitigating their passions, bring them to good terms, this is a laudable meddling, this is a blessed practice. So I leave this particular, and finish the directive part of my discourse.

IV. I shall now farther only briefly propose some considerations inducing to quietness, and dissuasive from pragmaticalness; such as arise from the nature, properties, causes, and effects of each; serving to commend the one, and disparage the other.

1. Consider that quietness is just and equal, pragmaticalness is injurious. When we contain ourselves quiet, and mind only our own business, we allow every man his right, we harm no man's repute; we keep ourselves within our bounds, and trespass not on the place or interest of our neighbor; we disturb not the right order and course of things: but in being pragmatical we do wrongfully deprive others of their right and liberty to manage their business; we prejudice their credit, implicitly charging them with weakness and incapacity to dispatch their affairs without our direction; we therefore, on our own unequal and partial judgment, do prefer and advance ourselves above them; we assume to ourselves in many respects more than our due, withdrawing it from others. In fine, no man loveth that others should invade his office, or intrude into his business; therefore in justice every man should forbear doing so toward others.

2. Quietness signifieth humility, modesty, and sobriety of mind; that we conceit not ourselves more wise than our neighbor; that we allow every man his share of discretion; that we take others for able and skilful enough to understand and manage their own affairs: but pragmaticalness argueth much overweening and arrogance; that we take ourselves for the only men of wisdom, at least for more wise than those into whose business we thrust ourselves.

3. Quietness is beneficial to the world, preserving the general order of things, disposing men to keep within their rank and station, and within the sphere of their power and ability, regularly attending to the work and business proper to them; whereby as themselves do well, so the public doth thrive: but pragmaticalness disturbeth the world, confounding things, removing the distinction between superior, inferior, and equal, rendering each man's business uncertain; while some undertake that which belongeth not to them: one busy-body often, as

we find by experience, is able to disturb and pester a whole society.

4. Quietness preserveth concord and amity: for no man is thereby provoked, being suffered undisturbedly to proceed in his course, according to his mind and pleasure: but pragmaticalness breedeth dissensions and feuds: for all men are ready to quarrel with those who offer to control them, or cross them in their way; every man will be zealous in maintaining his privilege of choosing, and acting according to his choice; and cannot but oppose those who attempt to bereave him of it; whence between the busy-body assailing, and others defending their liberty, combustions must arise.

5. Quietness, to the person endued with it, or practising it, begetteth tranquillity and peace; for he that letteth others alone, and cometh in no man's way, no man will be apt to disquiet or cross him; he keepeth himself out of broils and factions: but the busy-body createth vexation and trouble to himself; others will be ready to molest him in his proceedings, because he disturbeth them in theirs: he that will have a sickle in another's corn, or an oar in every man's boat, no wonder if his fingers be rapped; men do not more naturally brush off flies which buzz about their ears, sit on their faces or hands, and sting or tickle them, than they strive to drive away clamorous and incroaching busy-bodies. 'Let,' saith St. Peter, 'none of you suffer as a busy-body in other men's matters;' it is, he intimateth, a practice whereby a man becometh liable to suffer, or which men are apt to punish soundly: and so the wise man, implying the fondness and danger of it, 'He,' saith he, 'that passeth by, and meddleth with strife not belonging to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears;' that is, without any probable good effect, he provoketh a creature that will snarl at him and bite him.

6. Quietness is a decent and lovely thing, as signifying good disposition, and producing good effects; but pragmaticalness is ugly and odious. Every man gladly would be a neighbor to a quiet person, as who by the steady calmness and smoothness of his humor, the inoffensive stillness and sweetness of his demeanor, doth afford all the pleasure of conversation, without

any cross or trouble. But no man willingly would dwell by him, who is apt ever to be infesting him by his turbulent humor, his obstreperous talk, his tumultuous and furious carriage; who, on all occasions, without invitation or consent, will be thrusting in his eyes, his tongue, his hand; prying into all that is done, dictating this or that course, taxing all proceeding, usurping a kind of jurisdiction over him and his actions; no man will like, or can well endure such a neighbor. It is commonly observed that pride is not only abominable to God, but loathsome to man; and of all prides, this is the most offensive and odious: for the pride which keepeth at home, within a man's heart or fancy, not issuing forth to trouble others, may indeed well be despised, as hugely silly and vain; but that which breaketh out to the disturbance and vexation of others, is hated as molestful and mischievous.

7. Quietness adorneth any profession, bringing credit, respect, and love thereto; but pragmaticalness is scandalous, and procureth odium to any party or cause: men usually do cloak their pragmatical behavior with pretences of zeal for public good, or of kindness to some party which they have espoused; but thereby they do really cast reproach, and draw prejudice on their side: if it be a good cause, they do thereby wrong it, making it to partake of the blame incident to such carriage, as if it did produce or allow disorder; if it be a bad cause, they wrong themselves, aggravating the guilt of their adherence thereto; for it is a less fault to be calm and remiss in an ill way, than busy or violent in promoting it. Nothing hath wrought more prejudice to religion, or hath brought more disparagement on truth, than boisterous and unseasonable zeal; pretending in ways of passion, of fierceness, of rudeness to advance them: a quiet sectary doth to most men's fancy appear more lovely, than he that is furiously and factiously orthodox: the ornament of 'a meek and quiet spirit is,' saith St. Peter, 'in God's sight, of great price;' and it is also very estimable in the opinion of men.

8. Quiet is a safe practice, keeping men not only from needless incumbrances of business, but from the hazards of it; or being charged with its bad success: but pragmaticalness is dangerous; for if things go ill, the meddler surely will be loaded with the

blame; the profit and commendation of prosperities will accrue to the persons immediately concerned; but the disaster and damage will be imputed to those who meddled in the business; to excuse or ease themselves, men will cast the disgrace on those who did project or further the undertaking: he therefore that would be secure, let him be quiet; he that loveth peril and trouble, let him be pragmatical.

9. It is consequently a great point of discretion to be quiet, it yielding a man peace and safety without any trouble; and it is a manifest folly to be pragmatical, it being only with care, pains, and trouble, to seek dissatisfaction to others, and danger to himself; it being also to affect many not only inconveniences, but impossibilities.

Is it possible for any man to grasp or compass an infinity of business? Yet this the pragmatical man seemeth to drive at; for the businesses of other men are infinite, and into that abyss he plungeth himself, who passeth beyond his own bounds; by the same reason that he meddleth with any beside his own, he may undertake all the affairs in the world; so he is sure to have work enough, but fruit surely little enough of his pains.

Is it imaginable that we can easily bring others to our bent, or induce men to submit their business to our judgment and humor? Will not he that attempteth such things assuredly expose himself to disappointment and regret? Is it not therefore wisdom to let every man have his own way, and pursue his concernments without any check or control from us?

10. We may also consider that every man hath business of his own sufficient to employ him; to exercise his mind, to exhaust his care and pains to take up all his time and leisure. To study his own near concernments, to provide for the necessities and conveniences of his life, to look to the interests of his soul, to be diligent in his calling, to discharge faithfully and carefully all his duties relating to God and man, will abundantly employ a man; well it is if some of them do not incumber and distract him: he that will set himself with all his might to perform these things, will find enough to do; he need not seek farther for work, he need not draw more trouble on him.

Seeing then every man hath burden enough on his shoulders, imposed by God and nature, it is vain to take on him more load,

by engaging himself in the affairs of others; he will thence be forced, either to shake off his own business, or to become overburdened and oppressed with more than he can bear. It is indeed hence observable, and it needs must happen, that those who meddle with the business of others are wont to neglect their own; they that are much abroad can seldom be at home; they that know others most are least acquainted with themselves: and the wise Hebrew, 'The wisdom of a learned man comes by opportunity of leisure, (*σοφία σοφιστοῦ ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς,*) and he that hath little business shall be wise;' (*ὁ ἐλασσούμενος πράξει αὐτοῦ σοφισθήσεται.*) Whence it is scarce possible that a pragmatical man should be a good man; that is, such an one who honestly and carefully performeth the duties incumbent on him.

Philosophers therefore generally have advised men to shun needless occupations, as the certain impediments of a good and happy life; they bid us endeavor *ἁπλοῦν ἑαυτούς*, 'to simplify ourselves,' or to get into a condition requiring of us the least that can be to do. St. Paul intended the same when he advised us, *μὴ ἐμπλέκεσθαι ταῖς τοῦ βίου πραγματείαις*, 'not to be entangled in the negociations of life:' and our Saviour, when he touched Martha for 'being troubled about many things.' So far therefore we should be from taking in hand the affairs of other men, that we should labor to contract our own, and reduce them to the fewest that we can; otherwise we shall hardly attain wisdom, or be able to perform our duty.

11. But suppose us to have much spare time, and to want business, so that we are to seek for divertisement, and must for relief fly to curiosity; yet it is not advisable to meddle with the affairs of other men; there are divers other ways more innocent, more safe, more pleasant, more advantageous to divert ourselves, and satisfy curiosity.

Nature offereth herself, and her inexhaustible store of appearances to our contemplation; we may, without any harm, and with much delight, survey her rich varieties, examine her proceedings, pierce into her secrets. Every kind of animals, of plants, of minerals, of meteors presenteth matter wherewith innocently, pleasantly, and profitably to entertain our minds. There are many noble sciences, by applying our minds to the

study whereof, we may not only divert them, but improve and cultivate them: the histories of ages past, or relations concerning foreign countries, wherein the manners of men are described, and their actions reported, may afford us useful pleasure and pastime; thereby we may learn as much, and understand the world as well, as by the most curious inquiry into the present actions of men; there we may observe, we may scan, we may tax the proceedings of whom we please, without any danger or offence: there are extant numberless books, wherein the wisest and most ingenious of men have laid open their hearts, and exposed their most secret cogitations unto us; in pursuing them we may sufficiently busy ourselves, and let our idle hours pass gratefully; we may meddle with ourselves, studying our own dispositions, examining our principles and purposes, reflecting on our thoughts, words, and actions; striving thoroughly to understand ourselves; to do this we have an unquestionable right, and by it we shall obtain vast benefit, much greater than we can hope to get by puddering in the designs or doings of others. Pragmaticalness then, as it is very dangerous and troublesome, so it is perfectly needless; it is a kind of idleness, but of all idleness the most unreasonable: it is at least worse than idleness in St. Gregory Nazianzen's opinion. For, 'I had rather,' said he, 'be idle more than I should, than over-busy.'* Other considerations might be added; but these, I hope, may be sufficient to restrain this practice, so unprofitable and uneasy to ourselves, and, for the most part, so injurious and troublesome to others.

Now the God of peace make us perfect in every good word and work, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

* Ἀργὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον τοῦ δέοντος, ἢ περίεργος δέχομαι.—Greg. Naz. Or. 26.

SERMON XXIII.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 37.

PREVIOUS observations on the occasion of this text; the crafty design which produced it; the defeat of that design by our Saviour; the extent and excellence of the great duty inculcated in it: plan of the discourse is, first, to explain the nature of this love so commanded us; then to show the means of attaining it; lastly, to propound some inducements to the purchase and practice of it.

I. Love in general defined: its chief properties all shown in some sort to agree well with that love which we owe to God, according to the tenor of the law in the text, and in the degree therein expressed; for even of this divine love the chief properties may be conceived to be as follow.

1. A right apprehension and firm persuasion concerning God, and consequently a high esteem of him as most excellent in himself, and most beneficial to us: this topic enlarged on. 2. An earnest desire of obtaining a propriety in him; of possessing him; of approaching him; and of being, as far as may be, united to him: this illustrated by examples from Scripture. 3. Coherent with this is a third property, viz. a great satisfaction and delight in the enjoyment of God; in the sense of having such a propriety in him; in the partaking of those emanations of favor and beneficence from him; and consequently in the instruments that convey, and the means that conduce to such enjoyment: this enlarged on. 4. The sensation of much displeasure and regret in being deprived of such enjoyment; in

the absence or distance of God from us; in the loss or lessening of his favor, &c. 5. Another property of this love is, to bear the highest good-will towards God, in those interests and concerns, which out of his abundant goodness and condescension he considers as his own: this topic enlarged on.

The nature of this love being explained, if we perceive that we practice the particular duties thereby recommended, we may to our comfort infer that we are proportionably endued with it; if not, we ought with remorse and sorrow to suspect that we abide in a state of disaffection or indifference towards God. If we find the former good disposition, we should strive to cherish and improve it; if the second bad one, we should, as we would avoid misery and ruin, endeavor to remove it.

II. To the effecting which purposes certain means conducive thereto are propounded: some, which may remove obstacles; others, which may immediately promote the duty.

Of the first kind are those which follow.

1. The destroying all loves opposite to the love of God; extinguishing all affection to things odious and offensive to him; mortifying all corrupt, perverse, and unholy desires. 2. If we would obtain this excellent grace, we must restrain our affections towards all other things, however innocent or indifferent in their nature: instance of the rich young man in the gospel: character of St. Paul in this respect, &c. 3. To this may be added the freeing of our hearts from immoderate affection to ourselves; that is, from any conceit of ourselves, from any high confidence in what we may have within us or about us: this topic enlarged on.

These are the chief obstacles, the removing of which conduces to the begetting and increasing the love of God in us; especially if we add those positive instruments which are more immediately and directly subservient to the production of it: these are,

1. Attentive consideration of the divine perfections, with an endeavor to obtain a right and clear apprehension of them.

2. Consideration of God's works of nature, of providence, and of grace.

3. Serious regard and reflexion on the peculiar benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed to ourselves.

4. An earnest resolution and endeavor to perform his commandments, although on the inferior considerations of reason.

5. Assiduous prayer, that he in mercy would please to bestow his love on us, by his grace working in us. Conclusion.

SERMON XXIII.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 37.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

THIS text is produced by our Saviour out of Moses's law in answer to a question, wherewith a learned pharisee thought to pose or puzzle him; the question was, Which was the great and first commandment in the law? a question which, it seems, had been examined, and determined among the doctors, in the schools of those days, (for in St. Luke, to the like question intimated by our Saviour, another lawyer readily yields the same answer, and is therefore commended by our Saviour, with a *recte respondisti*, 'thou hast answered rightly;') so that had our Saviour answered otherwise, he had, we may suppose, been taxed of ignorance and unskilfulness, perhaps also of error and heterodoxy; to convict him of which seems to have been the design of this Jewish trier or tempter (for he is said to ask πειράζων αὐτὸν, trying, or tempting him.) But our Saviour defeats his captious intent, by answering, not only according to truth and the reason of the thing, but agreeably to the doctrine then current, and as the lawyer himself out of his memory and learning would have resolved it: and no wonder, since common sense dictates that the law enjoining sincere and intire love toward God is necessarily the first and chief, or the most fundamental law of all religion; for that whosoever doth believe the being of God, according to the most common notion that name

bears, must needs discern himself obliged first and chiefly to perform those acts of mind and will toward him, which most true and earnest love do imply: different expressions of love may be prescribed, peculiar grounds of love may be declared in several ways of religion; but in the general and main substance of the duty all will conspire, all will acknowlege readily, that it is love we chiefly owe to God; the duty which he may most justly require of us, and which will be most acceptable to him. It was then indeed the great commandment of the old (or rather of the young and less perfect) religion of the Jews, and it is no less of the more adult and improved religion which the Son of God did institute and teach: the difference only is, that Christianity declares more fully how we should exercise it; and more highly engages us to observe it; requires more proper and more substantial expressions thereof; extends our obligation as to the matter, and intends it as to the degree thereof: for as it represents almighty God in his nature and in his doings more lovely than any other way of religion, either natural or instituted, hath done, or could do; so it proportionably raises our obligation to love him: it is, as St. Paul speaketh, *τὸ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας*, the last drift, or the supreme pitch of the evangelical profession and institution to love; to love God first, and then our neighbor 'out of a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned:' it is the bond, or knot of that perfection which the gospel enjoins us to aspire to: it is the first and principal of those goodly fruits, which the Holy Spirit of Christ produceth in good Christians. It is therefore plainly with us also the great commandment and chief duty: chiefly great in its extent, in its worth, in its efficacy, and influence: most great it is, in that it doth (eminently at least, or virtually) contain all other laws and duties of piety; they being all as branches making up its body, or growing out of it as their root. St. Paul saith of the love toward our neighbor, that it is *πλήρωμα τοῦ νόμου*, 'a full performance of the laws' concerning him: and that 'all commandments, *ἀνακεφαλαιοῦνται*, are recapitulated, or summed up in this one saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself:' and by like, or greater reason are all the duties of piety comprised in the love of God; which is the chief of those two hinges, 'on which,' as our

Saviour here subjoins, 'the whole law and the prophets do hang.' So great is this duty in extent: and it is no less in proper worth; both as it immediately respects the most excellent and most necessary performances of duty, (employing our highest faculties in their best operations,) and as it imparts virtue and value to all other acts of duty: for no sacrifice is acceptable, which is not kindled by this heavenly fire; no offering sweet and pure, which is not seasoned by this holy salt; no action is truly good or commendable, which is not conjoined with, or doth not proceed from the love of God; that is not performed with a design to please God, or, at least, with an opinion that we shall do so thereby. If a man perform any good work not out of love to God, but from any other principle, or for any other design, (to please himself or others, to get honor or gain thereby,) how can it be acceptable to God, to whom it hath not any due regard? And what action hath it for its principle, or its ingredient, becomes sanctified thereby, in great measure pleasing and acceptable to God; such is the worth and value thereof. It is also the great commandment for efficacy and influence, being naturally productive of obedience to all other commandments; especially of the most genuine and sincere obedience; no other principle being in force and activity comparable thereto; (fear may drive to a compliance with some, and hope may draw to an observance of others; but it is love, that with a kind of willing constraint and kindly violence carries on cheerfully, vigorously, and swiftly to the performance of all God's commandments: 'If any man loves me,' saith our Saviour, 'he will keep my word:' to keep his word is a natural and necessary result of love to him: 'This is the love of God,' saith St. John, 'that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous;' it is the nature of that love to beget a free and delightful obedience:) such then is the subject of our discourse; even the sum, the soul, the spring of all our religion and duty. And because it is requisite, both for our direction how to do, and the examination of ourselves whether we do as we ought, that we should understand what we are so far obliged to; that we may be able to perform it, and that we be effectually disposed thereto, I shall use this method; I will first endeavor to explain the

nature of this love commanded us; then, to show some means of attaining it; lastly, to propound some inducements to the purchase and practice thereof.

I. For the first part; we may describe love in general (for it seems not so easy to define it exactly) to be an affection or inclination of the soul toward an object, proceeding from an apprehension and esteem of some excellency or some conveniency therein, (its beauty, worth, or usefulness,) producing thereon, if the object be absent or wanting, a proportionable desire, and consequently an endeavor to obtain such a propriety therein, such a possession thereof, such an approximation or union thereto, as the thing is capable of; also a regret and displeasure in the failing so to obtain it; or in the want, absence, and loss thereof; likewise begetting a complacence, satisfaction, and delight in its presence, possession, or enjoyment; which is moreover attended with a good-will thereto, suitable to its nature; that is, with a desire that it should arrive unto and continue in its best state; with a delight to perceive it so to thrive and flourish; with a displeasure to see it suffer or decay in any wise; with a consequent endeavor to advance it in all good, and preserve it from all evil. Which description containing the chief properties of love in common, do in some sort (not to insist on abstracted notions, or in examples remote from our purpose) all of them well agree to that love which we owe to God, according to the tenor of this law, and in the degree therein expressed; that is, in the best manner and highest degree; for even of this divine love the chief properties (prerequisite thereto, or intimately conjoined therewith, or naturally resulting from it) I conceive are these.

1. A right apprehension and firm persuasion concerning God, and consequently a high esteem of him as most excellent in himself and most beneficial to us: for such is the frame of our soul, that the perceptive part doth always go before the appetitive, that affection follows opinion, that no object otherwise moves our desire, than as represented by reason, or by fancy, good unto us: what effect will the goodliest beauty, or the sweetest harmony have on him, who wants sense to discern, or judgment to prize them? This is our natural way of acting; and according to it, that we may in due measure love God, he

must appear proportionably amiable, and desirable to us; we must entertain worthy thoughts of him, as full of all perfection in himself; as the fountain of all good; as the sole author of all that happiness we can hope for or receive: as he, in possession of whom we shall possess all things desirable; in effect and virtue, all riches, all honors, all pleasure, all good that we are capable of; and without whom we can enjoy no real good or true content: which esteem of him, how can it otherwise than beget affection toward him? If the faint resemblances, or the slender participations of such excellences (of that incomprehensible wisdom, that uncontrollable power, that unconfined bounty, that unblemished purity, which are united in him, and shine from him with a perfect lustre; if, I say, the very faint resemblances, and imperfect participations of these excellences) discerned in other things, are apt to raise our admiration, and allure our affection toward them; if the glimmering of some small inconsiderable benefit, the shadow of real profit discovered in these inferior empty things, is able so strongly to attract our eyes, and fix our hearts on them, why should not from a like, but so much greater cause, the like effect proceed? whence can it be that the apprehension of an object so infinitely lovely, so incomparably beneficial (if not passing cursorily through our fancy, but deeply impressed on our mind) should not proportionably affect and incline us toward him with all that desire, that delight, that good-will which are proper to love? If we think, as the psalmist did, that 'there is none in heaven or in earth comparable to God,' (comparable in essential perfection, comparable in beneficial influence,) why should we not be disposed also to say with him; 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee.' Such a reverent esteem is the proper foundation on which true love is built, and which upholds it: whence, as the love of God doth commonly denote all the duties of religion; so doth fear (or reverence to him) likewise in Scripture style comprehend and express them all; it being the root from whence love doth sprout, and by which it is nourished; it being the beginning of that true wisdom by which we embrace and fasten our affection on the sovereign good. Hence we may observe that those devout persons, whose hearts were fullest of

this love, their minds were most employed in meditation on the divine excellences, and on the beneficial emanations from them in bounty and mercy on the creatures; their tongues being tuned by their thoughts, and their inward esteem breaking forth into praise. 'Every day, all the day long, at all times did they bless God, praise his name, speak of his righteousness, show forth his salvation,' as the psalmist expresses his practice, arising from love enlivened by the esteem of God, and the apprehension of his excellent goodness: from whence also that strong faith, that constant hope, that cheerful confidence they reposed in him; that hearty approbation of all his counsels and purposes; that full acquiescence of mind in his proceedings; that intire submission of their understanding to his discipline, and resignation of their will to his good pleasure; that yielding up themselves (their souls and bodies, their lives and goods) to his disposal, with all the like high effects and pregnant signs of love did flow: but,

2. Another property of this love is an earnest desire of obtaining a propriety in God; of possessing him, in a manner, and enjoying him; of approaching him, and being, so far as may be, united to him. When we stand on such terms with any person, that we have a free access unto and a familiar intercourse with him; that his conversation is profitable and delightful to us; that we can on all occasions have his advice and assistance; that he is always ready in our needs, and at our desire, to employ what is in him of ability for our good and advantage, we may be said to own such a person, to possess and enjoy him; to be tied, as it were, and joined to him (as it is said 'the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, so that he loved him as his own soul.') And such a propriety in, such a possession of, such an alliance and conjunction to himself, God vouchsafes to them who are duly qualified for so great a good. 'He was not ashamed,' saith the Apostle concerning the faithful patriarchs, 'to be called their God;' to be appropriated in a manner unto them; and, 'He that acknowlegeth the Son,' saith St. John concerning good Christians, καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει, 'hath' (or possesseth) 'the Father also:' and to seek; to find; to draw near to; to cleave unto; to abide with, to abide in; and such other phrases frequently do occur in

Scripture, denoting that near relation which good men stand in toward God; implying that he affords them a continual liberty of access and coming into his especial presence, that he admits them to a kind of converse and communion with himself, full of spiritual benefit and delight; that bearing an especial good-will and favor toward them, he is disposed to exert his infinite wisdom and power in their behalf; is ready to impart all needful and convenient good unto them (help in their needs, supply in wants, protection in dangers; the direction, assistance, and comfort of his Holy Spirit; pardon of sins and peace of conscience; all the blessings of grace here, and all the felicities of glory hereafter;) such an interest, as it were, in God and a title unto him, such a possession and enjoyment of him we are capable of obtaining: and as that enjoyment is in itself infinitely above all things desirable; so, if we love God, we cannot surely but be earnestly desirous thereof: a cold indifferency about it, a faint wishing for it, a slothful tendency after it, are much on this side love; it will inflame our heart, it will transport our mind, it will beget a vigorous and lively motion of soul toward it: for love, you know, is commonly resembled unto, yea even assumes the name of fire; for that it warms the breast, agitates the spirits, quickens all the powers of soul, and sets them on work in desire and pursuance of the beloved object: you may imagine as well fire without heat or activity, as love without some ardency of desire. Longing and thirsting of soul; fainting for, and panting after; crying out, and stretching forth the hands toward God; such are the expressions signifying the good psalmist's love; by so apt and so pathetical resemblances doth he set out the vehemency of his desire to enjoy God. I need not add concerning endeavor; for that by plain consequence doth necessarily follow desire: the thirsty soul will never be at rest till it have found out its convenient refreshment: if we, as David did, do 'long after God,' we shall also with him 'earnestly seek God;' nor ever be at rest till we have found him. Coherent with this is a

3. Third property of this love, that is, a great complacence, satisfaction, and delight in the enjoyment of God: in the sense of having such a propriety in him; in the partaking those emanations of favor and beneficence from him; and consequently

in the instruments conveying, in the means conducing to such enjoyment: for joy and content are the natural fruits of obtaining what we love, what we much value, what we earnestly desire. Yea, what we chiefly love, if we become possessed thereof, we easily rest satisfied therewith, although all other comforts be wanting to us. The covetous person, for instance, who dotes on his wealth, let him be pinched with the want of conveniences; let his body be wearied with toil; let his mind be distracted with care; let him be surrounded with obloquy and disgrace—*at miki plaudo ipse domi;* he nevertheless enjoys himself in beholding his beloved pelf: the ambitious man likewise, although his state be full of trouble and disquiet; though he be the mark of common envy and hatred; though he be exposed to many crosses and dangers; yet while he stands in power and dignity, among all those thorns of care and fear, his heart enjoys much rest and pleasure. In like manner we may observe those pious men, whose hearts were endued with this love, by the present sense, or assured hope of enjoying God, supporting themselves under all wants and distresses; rejoicing, yea, boasting and exulting in their afflictions; and no wonder, while they conceived themselves secure in the possession of their hearts' wish; of that which they incomparably valued and desired above all things; which by experience they have found so comfortable and delicious: 'O taste and see,' exclaims the psalmist, inspired with this passion, 'O taste and see, that the Lord is good: how excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord! They (they who enjoy it) shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures:' 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand:' 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness:' so did those devout practisers of this duty express the satisfaction they felt in God, and in those things whereby he did impart the enjoyment of himself unto them. So did the light of God's countenance cheer their heart; so did his loving-kindness appear better than life itself unto them. Hence do they so frequently enjoin and exhort us to be glad; to delight ourselves: to glory! to rejoice continually in the Lord; in the sense of his goodness, in the

hope of his favor; the doing so being an inseparable property of love; to which we adjoin another.

4. The feeling much displeasure and regret in being deprived of such enjoyment; in the absence or distance as it were of God from us; the loss or lessening of his favor; the subtraction of his gracious influences from us: for surely answerable to the love we bear unto any thing will be our grief for the want or loss thereof: it was a shrewd argument which the poet used to prove that men loved their monies better than their friends, because—*majore tumultu plorantur nummi, quam funera*—they more lamented the loss of those than the death of these: indeed, that which a man principally affects, if he is bereaved thereof, be his condition otherwise how prosperous and comfortable soever, he cannot be contented; all other enjoyments become unsavory and unsatisfactory to him. And so it is in our case, when God, although only for trial, according to his wisdom and good pleasure, hides his face, and withdraws his hand; leaving the soul in a kind of desolation and darkness; not finding that ready aid in distress, not feeling that cheerful vivacity in obedience, not tasting that sweet relish of devotion, which have been usually afforded thereto; if love reside in the heart, it will surely dispose it to a sensible grief; it will inspire such exclamations as those of the psalmist: 'How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thy face?' 'Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble:' 'Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies:' 'Draw nigh unto my soul and redeem it.' Even our Saviour himself in such a case, when God seemed for a time to withdraw the light of his countenance, and the protection of his helpful hand from him, (or to frown and lay his heavy hand on him) had his soul *περίλυπον ἕως θανάτου*, 'extremely grieved and full of deadly anguish;' neither surely was it any other cause than excess of love, which made that temporary desertion so grievous and bitter to him, extorting from his most meek and patient heart that woful complaint, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!' But especially, when 'our iniquities have,' as the prophet expresseth it, 'separated between our God and us;' and 'our sins have hid his face from us;' when that 'thick cloud' hath

eclipsed the light of his countenance, and intercepted his gracious influences; when by wilfully offending we have, as the Israelites are said to have done, 'rejected our God, cast him off, and driven him from us;' so depriving ourselves of propriety in him, and the possession of his favor; then if any love be alive in us, it will prompt us, with those good men in their penitential agonies, to be grievously sensible of, and sorely to bewail that our wretched condition; there will not, if we so heartily love God, and value his favor as they did, 'be any soundness in our flesh, or rest in our bones; our spirit will be overwhelmed within us, and our heart within us desolate.' 'Our heart will be smitten and withered like grass,' on the consideration and sense of so inestimable a loss. Love will render such a condition very sad and uneasy to us; will make all other delights insipid and distasteful; all our life will become bitter and burthensome to us; neither, if it in any measure abides in us, shall we receive content, till by humble deprecation we have regained some glimpse of God's favor, some hope of being reinstated in our possession of him. Farther yet,

5. Another property of this love is, to bear the highest goodwill toward God; so as to wish heartily and effectually, according to our power, to procure all good to him, and to delight in it; so as to endeavor to prevent and to remove all evil, if I may so speak, that may befal him, and to be heartily displeased therewith. Although no such benefit or advantage can accrue to God which may increase his essential and indefectible happiness; no harm or damage can arrive that may impair it, (for he can be neither really more or less rich, or glorious, or joyful than he is; neither have our desire or our fear, our delight or our grief, our designs or our endeavors any object, any ground in those respects;) yet hath he declared that there be certain interests and concernments, which, out of his abundant goodness and condescension, he doth tender and prosecute as his own: as if he did really receive advantage by the good, and prejudice by the bad success, respectively belonging to them; that he earnestly desires, and is greatly delighted with some things, very much dislikes, and is grievously displeased with other things: for instance, that he bears a fa-

therly affection toward his creatures, and earnestly desires their welfare; and delights to see them enjoy the good he designed them; as also dislikes the contrary events; doth commiserate and condole their misery; that he is consequently well pleased when piety and justice, peace and order (the chief means conducing to our welfare) do flourish; and displeased, when impiety and iniquity, dissension and disorder (those certain sources of mischief to us) do prevail; that he is well satisfied with our rendering to him that obedience, honor, and respect, which are due to him; and highly offended with our injurious and disrespectful behavior toward him in the commission of sin and violation of his most just and holy commandments: so that there wants not sufficient matter of our exercising good-will both in affection and action toward God; we are capable both of wishing, and (in a manner, as he will interpret and accept it) of doing good to him, by our concurrence with him, in promoting those things which he approves and delights in, and in removing the contrary. And so surely shall we do, if we truly love God: for love, as it would have the object to be its own, as it intends to enjoy it, so it would have it in its best state, and would put it thereinto, and would conserve it therein; and would thence contribute all it is able to the welfare, to the ornament, to the pleasure and content thereof. 'What is it,' saith Cicero, 'to love, but to will or desire, that the person loved should receive the greatest good that can be?'* Love also doth reconcile, conform, and unite the inclinations and affections of him who loves, to the inclinations and affections of him who is beloved; *eadem velle, et eadem nolle*, 'to consent in liking and disliking of things,' if it be not the cause, if it be not the formal reason or essence, as some have made it, it is at least a certain effect of love. If then we truly love God, we shall desire that all his designs prosper, that his pleasure be fulfilled, that all duty be performed, all glory rendered to him: we shall be grieved at the wrong, the dishonor, the disappointment he receives: especially we shall endeavor in our own practice, with holy David, to perform πάντα

* Quid est amare, nisi velle bonis aliquem affici quam maximis?—Cic. de Fin. 2.

τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ, all that God wills, desires, or delights in; to eschew whatever offends him. Our desire, our delight, our endeavor will conspire with and be subordinate to his; for it would be a strange kind of love that were consistent with the voluntary doing of that which is hurtful, injurious, or offensive to that we love; such actions being the proper effects, the natural signs of hatred and enmity: 'If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar,' saith St. John; and, 'If any man seeth his brother need, and shutteth his bowels toward him, how doth the love of God abide in him?' He that in his affections is so unlike, so contrary unto God; he that is unwilling to comply with God's will in so reasonable a performance; he that in a matter wherein God hath declared himself so much concerned, and so affected therewith, doth not care to cross him, to displease and disappoint him; how can he with any show of truth, or with any modesty pretend to love God? Hence it is, that keeping of God's commandments is commonly represented to us as the most proper expression, as the surest argument of our love to God: 'showing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments;' they are joined together as terms equivalent, or as inseparable companions in effect: 'he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:' 'ye are my friends, (that is, not only objects of my affection, but actively friends, bearing affection unto me,) if ye do whatsoever I command you,' saith our Saviour: and, 'Whoso keepeth his word, in him is the love of God truly perfected:' (he hath the truth and sincerity; he hath the integrity and consummation of love: without it love is wholly false and counterfeit, or very lame and imperfect; so the loving and beloved disciple teaches us.) For by doing thus, as we signify our esteem of God's wisdom which directeth us, our dread of his power and justice that can punish us, our hope in his goodness and fidelity to reward us, our regard to his majesty and authority over us; so especially thereby (if our obedience at least be free and cheerful) we express our good will toward him; showing thereby, that we are disposed to do him all the good and gratify him all we can; that his interests, his honor, his content are dear and precious to us. And were indeed our hearts knit unto God with this bond of

perfection, we could not in our wills, and consequently in our practice, be so severed from him; we should also love heartily all virtue and goodness, the nearest resemblances of him, and which he chiefly loves; we should do what David so oft professes himself to do, 'love his law, and greatly delight in his commandments.' With our Saviour, we should delight to perform his will; it would (as it was to him) be our meat and our drink to do it; his yoke would be easy indeed, and his burthen light unto us; his yoke so easy, that we should wear it rather as a jewel about our necks than as a yoke; his burthen so light, that we should not feel it as a burthen, but esteem it our privilege. We should not be so dull in apprehending, or so slack in performing duty; for this sharp-sighted affection would presently discern, would readily suggest it to us; by the least intimation it would perceive what pleaseth God, and would snatch opportunity of doing it: we should not need any arguments to persuade us, nor any force to compel us, love would inspire us with sufficient vigor and alacrity; it would urge and stimulate us forward not only to walk in, but even, as the psalmist expresseth it, to 'run the ways of God's commandments.'

But let thus much serve for explication of the nature of this duty; in order, as was before said, to the direction of our practice, and examination thereof: the particular duties mentioned being comprehended in, or appertaining to the love of God, if we perceive that we practise them, we may to our satisfaction and comfort infer, that proportionably we are endued with this grace; if not, we have reason (such as should beget remorse and pious sorrow in us) to suspect we abide in a state of disaffection or of indifferency toward him. If we find the former good disposition, we should strive to cherish and improve it; if the second bad one, we should (as we tender our own welfare and happiness, as we would avoid utter ruin and misery) endeavor to remove it.

II. To the effecting of which purposes I shall next propound some means conducible; some in way of removing obstacles, others by immediately promoting the duty.

Of the first kind are these ensuing:

1. The destroying of all loves opposite to the love of God;

extinguishing all affection to things odious and offensive to God; mortifying all corrupt and perverse, all unrighteous and unholy desires. It agrees with souls no less than with bodies, that they cannot at once move or tend contrary ways; upward and downward, backward and forward at one time: it is not possible we should together truly esteem, earnestly desire, bear sincere good-will to things in nature and inclination quite repugnant each to other. No man ever took him for his real friend, who maintains correspondency, secret or open, who joins in acts of hostility with his professed enemies: at least we cannot, as we ought, love God with our whole heart, if with any part thereof we affect his enemies; those, which are mortally and irreconcileably so; as are all iniquity and impurity, all inordinate lusts both of flesh and spirit: 'the carnal mind (the minding or affecting of the flesh) is,' St. Paul tells us, 'enmity toward God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor can be;' it is an enemy, even the worst of enemies, an incorrigibly obstinate rebel against God; and can we then, retaining any love to God or peace with him, comply and conspire therewith? And 'the friendship of the world (that is, I suppose, of those corrupt principles, and those vicious customs which usually prevail in the world) is also,' St. James tells us, 'enmity with God;' so that, he adds, 'if any man be a friend to the world, he is thereby constituted (he immediately *ipso facto* becomes) an enemy to God.' St. John affirms the same; 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' explaining himself, that by the world he means those things which are most generally embraced and practised therein; the lust, or desire, of the flesh, (that is, sensuality and intemperance,) the lust of the eyes, (that is, envy, covetousness, vain curiosity, and the like,) the ostentation, or boasting, of life, (that is, pride, ambition, vain-glory, arrogance,) qualities as irreconcileably opposite to the holy nature and will of God, so altogether inconsistent with the love of him; begetting in us an aversation and antipathy towards him; rendering his holiness distasteful to our affections, and his justice dreadful to our consciences; and himself consequently, his will, his law, his presence hateful to us: while we take him to be our enemy and to hate us, we shall certainly in like manner stand affected toward him: this indeed is

the main obstacle, the removal of which will much facilitate the introduction of divine love; it being a great step to reconciliation and friendship, to be disengaged from the adverse party: we should then easily discern the beauty of divine goodness and sanctity, when the mists of ignorance, of error, of corrupt prejudice, arising from those gross carnal affections, were dissipated; we should better relish the sweet and savory graces of God, when the palate of our mind were purged from vicious tinctures; we should be more ready to hope for peace and favor in his eyes, when our consciences were freed from the sense of such provocations and defilements. But,

2. If we would obtain this excellent grace, we must restrain our affections toward all other things, however in their nature innocent and indifferent. The young gentleman in the gospel had, it seems, arrived to the former pitch; having through the course of his life abstained from grosser iniquities and impurities; so far, that our Saviour, in regard to that attainment of his, conceived an affection for him, (he loved him, it is said,) yet was not he sufficiently disposed to love God; being 'in one thing deficient,' that he retained an immoderate affection to his wealth and worldly conveniences; with which sort of affections the love of God cannot consist: for we much undervalue God, and cannot therefore duly love him, if we deem any thing comparable to him, or considerable in worth or usefulness when he comes in competition: if we deem that the possession of any other thing beside him can confer to our happiness, or the want thereof can prejudice it, and make us miserable: no other love should bear any proportion to the love of him; no other object should appear (as indeed none really is) simply good, desirable, or amiable to us. What value St. Paul had of his legal qualifications and privileges, the same should we have concerning all other things in appearance pleasant or convenient to us; they ought, in regard to God, to 'seem damage and dung;' not only mean and despicable, but even sordid and loathsome to us; not only unworthy of our regard and desire, but deserving our hatred and abhorrency; we should, I say, even hate the best of them; so our Saviour expresseth it: 'If any man doth not hate his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and sisters, and even his own soul, (or his own life,) he cannot

be my disciple;' that is, if any man retain in his heart any affection not infinitely, as it were, less than that which he bears to God; if any thing be in comparison dear and precious to him, he is not disposed to entertain the main point of Christ's discipline, the sincere and intire love of God. To 'love him,' as he requires, 'with all our heart,' implies, that our heart be filled with his love, so that no room be left for any other passion to enter or dwell there. And indeed such, if we observe it, is the nature of our soul, we can hardly together harbor earnest or serious affections toward different objects; one of them will prevail and predominate; and so doing will not suffer the other to remain, but will extrude or extinguish it: no heart of man can correspond with two rivals, but, as our Saviour teacheth us, 'it will hate and despise one, will love and stick to the other;' whence he infers, that 'we cannot serve (that is, affectionately adhere to) both God and mammon.' If we have, according to the psalmist's phrase, 'set our hearts on wealth,' and 'will be rich;' (are resolved to be, as St. Paul expresseth it;) if we eagerly aspire to power and honor, with the pharisees, 'preferring the applause of men before the favor of God; if any worldly or bodily pleasure, or any curiosity how plausible soever, hath seized on our spirits and captivated our affections; if any inferior object, whatever with its apparent splendor, sweetness, goodliness, convenience hath so inveigled our fancy, that we have an exceeding esteem thereof, and a greedy appetite thereto; that we enjoy it with huge content, and cannot part from it without much regret; that thing doth at present take up God's place within us; so that our heart is uncapable, at least in due measure, of divine love: but if we be indifferently affected toward all such things, and are unconcerned in the presence or absence of them; esteeming them as they are, mean and vain; loving them as they deserve, as inferior and trivial; if, according to St. Paul's direction, 'we use them as if we used them not;' it is another good step toward the love of God: the divine light will shine more brightly into so calm and serene a medium: a soul void of other affections will not be only more capable to receive, but apt to suck in that heavenly one; being insensible, in any considerable degree, of all other comforts and complacences, we shall be apt to search after, and reach out at

that, which alone can satisfy our understanding and satiate our desires; especially if we add hereto,

3. The freeing of our hearts also from immoderate affection to ourselves; (I mean not from a sober desire or an earnest regard to our own true good; for this, as nature enforces to, so all reason allows, and even God's command obligeth us to; nor can it be excessive; but a high conceit of ourselves as worthy or able, a high confidence in any thing we have within us or about us;) for this is a very strong bar against the entrance, as of all other charity, so especially of this; for as the love of an external object doth thrust, as it were, our soul outwards towards it; so the love of ourselves detains it within, or draws it inwards; and consequently these inclinations crossing each other cannot both have effect, but one will subdue and destroy the other. If our mind be—*ipsa suis contenta bonis*—satisfied with her own (taking them for her own) endowments, abilities, or fancied perfections; if we imagine ourselves wise enough to perceive, good enough to choose, resolute enough to undertake, strong enough to achieve, constant enough to pursue whatever is conducible to our real happiness and best content; we shall not care to go farther; we will not be at the trouble to search abroad for that which, in our opinion, we can so readily find, so easily enjoy at home. If we so admire and dote on ourselves, we thereby put ourselves into God's stead, and usurp the throne due to him in our hearts; comparing ourselves to God, and in effect preferring ourselves before him; thereby consequently shutting out that unparalleled esteem, that predominant affection we owe to him; while we are busy in dressing and decking, in courting and worshiping this idol of our fancy, we shall be estranged from the true object of our devotion; both we shall willingly neglect him, and he in just indignation will desert us. But if as all other things, so even ourselves do appear exceedingly vile and contemptible, foul and ugly in comparison to God; if we take ourselves to be (as truly we are) mere nothings, or somethings worse; not only destitute of all considerable perfections, but full of great defects; blind and fond in our conceits, crooked and perverse in our wills, infirm and unstable in all our powers, unable to discern, unwilling to embrace, backward to set on,

inconstant in prosecuting those things which are truly good and advantageous to us; if we have, I say, this right opinion and judgment of ourselves, seeing within us nothing lovely or desirable, no proper object there of our esteem or affection, no bottom to rest our mind on, no ground of solid comfort at home, we shall then be apt to look abroad, to direct our eyes, and settle our affections on somewhat more excellent in itself, or more beneficial to us, that seems better to deserve our regard, and more able to supply our defects. And if all other things about us appear alike deformed and deficient, unworthy our affection, and unable to satisfy our desires, then may we be disposed to seek, to find, to fasten and repose our soul on the only proper object of our love; in whom we shall obtain all that we need, infallible wisdom to guide us, omnipotent strength to help us, infinite goodness for us to admire and enjoy.

These are the chief obstacles, the removing of which conduces to the begetting and increasing the love of God in us. A soul so cleansed from love to bad and filthy things, so emptied of affection to vain and unprofitable things, so opened and dilated by excluding all conceit of, all confidence in itself, is a vessel proper for the divine love to be infused into; into so large and pure a vacuity (as finer substances are apt to flow of themselves into spaces void of grosser matter) that free and moveable spirit of divine grace will be ready to succeed, and therein to disperse itself. As all other things in nature, the clogs being removed which hinder them, do presently tend with all their force to the place of their rest and well-being; so would, it seems, our souls, being loosed from baser affections obstructing them, willingly incline toward God, the natural centre, as it were, and bosom of their affection; would resume, as Origen speaks, that natural philtre (that intrinsic spring, or incentive of love) which all creatures have toward their Creator; especially, if to these we add those positive instruments, which are more immediately and directly subservient to the production of this love; they are these:

1. Attentive consideration of the divine perfections, with endeavor to obtain a right and clear apprehension of them.

2. The consideration of God's works and actions; his works and actions of nature, of providence, of grace.

3. Serious regard and reflexion on the peculiar benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed to ourselves.

4. An earnest resolution and endeavor to perform God's commandments, although on inferior considerations of reason; on hope, fear, desire to attain the benefits of obedience, to shun the mischiefs from sin.

5. Assiduous prayer to Almighty God, that he in mercy would please to bestow his love on us, and by his grace to work it in us.

But I must forbear the prosecution of these things, rather than farther trespass on your patience. Let us conclude all with a good Collect, sometimes used by our church.

'O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee; grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXIV.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 37.

PREVIOUS observations on the great duty recommended in the text, as the main spring of all other duties: review of what was said in the preceding discourse, regarding the essential properties of love towards God, and the means proposed for removing all impediments in the way of it. Observations on the instruments there enumerated, which are immediately and directly subservient to its production.

1. Attentive consideration on the divine perfections, &c. As counterfeit worth and beauty receive advantage by distance and darkness, so real excellence, the greater light you view it in, and the nearer you approach it, the more you will approve and like it: thus the more we think of God, the better we know him, the fuller and clearer conceptions we have of him, the more we shall be apt to esteem and desire him, the more excellent and beneficent to us he will appear: this topic enlarged on.

2. Consideration of God's works and actions. Even the contemplation of the lower works of nature, of this visible frame of things, hath in many minds excited a very high degree of reverence and affection towards God: instance of the holy psalmist. The same effect also may be produced by considering the common proceedings of divine providence, such as are discernible to every attentive mind from history and daily experience; but especially by the study and contemplation of those more high and rare proceedings of God, in managing his gracious design of our redemption from sin and misery. Miser-

ably cold and damp must our affections be, if all these powerful rays of heavenly light and heat, shining through our minds, cannot inflame them.

3. Serious reflexions on personal benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed to ourselves. Every man's experience will inform him that he has received many such, from a hand, invisible indeed to sense, yet easily discernible, if he attends to the circumstances and seasons in which they came; nor is there any one who may not perceive himself singularly indebted to God's patience in forbearing to punish, to his mercy in pardoning offences: the reason and nature of things therefore will urge us to follow the Apostle's precept, *Let us therefore love God, because God first loved us.*

4. To these means may be added, as a special help, the setting ourselves in good earnest, with a strong and constant resolution, to endeavor to perform all our duty towards God, on the inferior considerations of reason, as fear, hope, desire to avoid the mischiefs arising from sin, and to attain the benefits attached to virtue. If we cannot immediately raise our hearts to that higher pitch of acting from the nobler principle of love, let us practise that which we can reach, striving as we are able to perform what God requires of us: so from doing good out of a regard to our own welfare, we shall come to like it in itself, and consequently to love him, unto whose nature and will it renders us conformable.

5. But as a most necessary mean of attaining this disposition, let us adopt earnest and assiduous prayer to God, that he would in mercy bestow it on us, and by his grace work it in us; which practice is indeed doubly conducive to this purpose, both in way of impetration, and by real efficacy: it will not fail to obtain it as a gift from God; it will help to produce it as an instrument of God's grace: this topic enlarged on.

III. The inducements arising from a consideration of the blessed fruits of this love, and the miserable consequences

arising from the want of it, are lastly enumerated, but not dilated on; such as the manner in which it perfects and advances our nature; how it ennobles us with a glorious alliance, rendering us friends and favorites of the sovereign Lord of all, and brethren of the first-born; enriches us with a right and title to inestimable treasures, and affords us the most unspeakable delights: how contrariwise the want of it will depress us into a state of the greatest imperfection and baseness, setting us at a distance from God in all respects; how it will impoverish us, divest us of all right to any good thing, and render us incapable of any portion but that of utter darkness; how it will exclude us from all safety, rest, true comfort or joy, and expose us to all mischief and misery imaginable.

This love might have been compared with other loves, and thus recommended by the comparison; some particular advantages of it might also have been subjoined, and its practice shown to be, not only a mean and way to happiness, but our very formal happiness itself, a real enjoyment of the best good which we are capable of; that in which heaven itself consists. Conclusion.

SERMON XXIV.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 37.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

'WHICH is the great commandment?' was the question, in answer whereto our Saviour returns this text; and that with highest reason, (discernible by every man,) for that of necessity the love of God is the principal duty we owe unto him: the great duty indeed, as being largest in extent, and comprehending in a manner all other duties of piety; as that which exceeds in proper worth and dignity, (employing the noblest faculties of our souls in their best operations on the most excellent object,) as that which communicates virtue unto, and hath a special influence on all other duties; in fine, as that which is the sum, the soul, the spring of all other duties: in discoursing whereon, I did formerly propound this method; first, to declare the nature thereof; then, to show some means apt to beget and improve that excellent virtue in us; lastly, to propose some inducements to the practice thereof.

The first part I endeavored to perform, by describing it according to its essential properties (common to love in general, and more particularly to this) of duly esteeming God, of desiring, according as we are capable, to possess and enjoy him, of receiving delight and satisfaction in the enjoyment of him, of feeling displeasure in being deprived hereof, of bearing good-

will unto him, expressed by endeavors to please him, by delighting in the advancement of his glory, by grieving when he is disserved or dishonored.

The next part I also entered on, and offered to consideration those means, which serve chiefly to remove the impediments of our love to God; which were,

1. The suppressing all affections opposite to this; all perverse and corrupt, all unrighteous and unholy desires.

2. The restraining or keeping within bounds of moderation our affections toward other things, even in their nature innocent or indifferent.

3. The freeing of our hearts from immoderate affection toward ourselves; from all conceit of, and confidence in, any qualities or abilities of our own; the diligent use of which means I did suppose would conduce much to the production and increase of divine love within us.

To them I shall now proceed to subjoin other instruments more immediately and directly subservient to the same purpose: whereof the first is,

1. Attentive consideration on the divine perfections, with endeavor to obtain a right and clear apprehension of them: as counterfeit worth and beauty receive advantage by distance and darkness; so real excellency,—*si propius stes, te capiet magis*—the greater light you view it in, the nearer you approach it, the more strictly you examine it, the more you will approve and like it: so the more we think of God, the better we know him, the fuller and clearer conceptions we have of him, the more we shall be apt to esteem and desire him; the more excellent in himself, the more beneficial to us he will appear. Hence is the knowlege of God represented in holy writ not only as a main instrument of religion, but as an essential character thereof: as equivalent to the being well affected toward God: 'O continue,' saith the psalmist, 'thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee;' that is, to all religious people. And, 'This,' saith our Saviour, 'is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent;' knowlege of them implying all good affections toward them: as on the other side, ignorance of God denotes disaffection or want of affection toward God: 'Now the sons of Eli,' it is said, 'were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord:' and, 'He that loveth

not,' saith St. John, 'doth not know God;' the want of love to God is an evident sign, a natural effect of ignorance concerning him: indeed considering the nature of our mind, and its ordinary method of operation, it seems impossible that such perfection discerned should not beget answerable reverence and affection thereto: if beautiful spectacles, harmonious sounds, fragrant odors, delicate savors, do necessarily and certainly please the respective senses; why should not with the like sure efficacy the proper objects of our mind affect it, if duly represented and conveyed thereto? If the wit of the most ingenious artists, the cunning of the deepest politicians, the wisdom of the sagest philosophers are but mere blindness and stupidity in comparison to the wisdom of God; the lowest instance or expression of whose wisdom (his τὸ μωρὸν, 'his folly,' as St. Paul speaks) 'is wiser than men,' doth excel the results of man's highest wisdom; yet them we admire and commend in men, why then do we not much more adore the divine wisdom? If the abilities of them who dexterously manage great business, or achieve prosperously great exploits are indeed mere impotency in regard to God's power; whose weakness (that is, the smallest effects of whose power) is, as St. Paul again tells us, 'stronger than men,' surpasses the utmost results of human endeavors: yet those things in men we extol and celebrate, how can we then forbear to reverence the divine power? If the dispensers of freest and largest bounty among men, the noblest patriots, the most munificent benefactors, the most tenderly affectionate friends be in respect of God unworthy to be counted or called good, (as our Saviour tells us; 'If ye being bad know to give good things;' and, 'There is none good but God;') yet such persons are much beloved and applauded: how then can we abstain from paying the like measure of affection and respect to the divine goodness? If good qualities so inferior and defective obtain so much from us, whence comes it that the infinitely superior and most perfect excellences of God do not beget in their proportion a suitable regard and veneration in us toward him? whence, if not either from our not firmly believing them, or not rightly apprehending them, or not attentively considering them? Our belief of them in gross and at large we may suppose, as connected with the belief of God's existence, and included in the very notion of God;

the defect therefore must proceed from the remaining causes, want of a right apprehension, or neglect of attentive consideration about them: as to the first of these; it is common for men to have confused, imperfect, and wrong conceptions about the divine attributes, especially in the recesses of their mind; which although they spare to utter with their mouths, yet they vent in their practice: if we, for instance, imagine that we can comprehend the extent of God's designs, or fathom the depth of his counsels; if we measure and model his reasons of proceeding according to our fancy, (as 'if his thoughts were as our thoughts, and his ways as our ways;' or, as if he did 'see as man sees:') if we can 'bless ourselves in following our own imaginations,' counsels, and devices, although repugnant to the resolutions of divine wisdom; taking these not to befit, or not to concern us, as we find many in the Scripture reproved for doing; we greatly mistake and undervalue that glorious attribute of God, his wisdom; and no wonder then, if we do not on account thereof duly reverence and love God: likewise if we concerning the divine power conceit that, notwithstanding it, we shall be able to accomplish our unlawful designs; that we may, as it is in Job, 'harden our hearts against him and prosper;' that we can anywise either withstand or evade his power, (as also many are intimated to do, in Scripture; even generally all those who dare presumptuously to offend God,) we also misconceive of that excellent attribute: and the contempt of God, rather than love of him, will thence arise. If, concerning the divine goodness and holiness, we imagine that God is disaffected toward his creatures, (antecedently to all demerits, or bad qualifications in them,) yea indifferent in affection toward them; inclinable to do them harm, or not propense to do them good; if we deem him apt to be harsh and rigorous in his proceedings, to exact performances unsuitable to the strength he hath given us, to impose burdens intolerable on us; will not such thoughts be apt to breed in us toward God (as they would toward any other person so disposed) rather a servile dread, (little different from downright hatred,) or an hostile aversation, than a genuine reverence or a kindly affection toward him? If we fancy him, like to pettish man, apt to be displeased without cause, or beyond measure,

for our doing somewhat innocent, (neither bad in itself, nor prejudicial to public or private good,) or for our omitting that, which no law, no good reason plainly requires of us; what will such thoughts but sour our spirits toward him, make us fearful and suspicious of him; which sort of dispositions are inconsistent with true love? If, on the other side, we judge him fond and partial in his affections; or slack and easy, as it were, in his proceedings; apt to favor us although we neglect him; to indulge us in our sins, or connive at our miscarriages; will not such thoughts rather incline us in our hearts to slight him, and in our actions insolently to dally with him, than heartily and humbly to love him? If we conceit his favor procured, or his anger appeased by petty observances, perhaps without any good rule or reason affected by ourselves; when we neglect duties of greater worth and consequence, 'the more weighty matters of the law;' what is this but instead of God to reverence an idol of our own fancy; to yield unto him (who is only pleased with holy dispositions of mind, with real effects of goodness) not duties of humble love, but acts of presumption and flattery? But if, contrariwise, we truly conceive of God's wisdom, that his counsels are always throughly good, and that we are concerned both in duty and interest to follow them, although exceeding the reach of our understanding, or contrary to the suggestions of our fancy; concerning his power, that it will certainly interpose itself to the hindrance of our bad projects, that it will be in vain to contest therewith, that we must submit unto, or shall be crushed by his hand; concerning his goodness, that as he is infinitely good and benign, so he is also perfectly holy and pure; as he wisheth us all good, and is ready to promote it, so he detesteth our sins, nor will suffer us to do himself, ourselves, and our neighbor any wrong; as most bountiful in dispensing his favors, so not prodigal of them, or apt to cast them away on such as little value them, and do not endeavor to answer them; as a faithful rewarder of all true virtue and piety, so a severe chastiser of all iniquity and profaneness; as full of mercy and pity toward them who are sensible of their unworthiness, and penitent for their faults, so an implacable avenger of obstinate and incorrigible wickedness: in fine, as a true friend to us, if we be not wilful enemies to him, and desirous of our

welfare, if we do not perversely render ourselves incapable thereof; so withal jealous of his own honor, resolute to maintain and vindicate his just authority, careful to uphold the interests of right and truth, and to show the distinction he makes between good and evil; if we have, I say, such conceptions of God, (agreeable to what his word and his doings represent him to us,) how can we otherwise than bear a most high respect, a most great affection unto him? A prince surely endued with such qualities; wise and powerful, good and just together; tendering the good of his people, yet preserving the force of his laws; designing always what is best, and constantly pursuing his good intentions; tempering bounty and clemency with needful justice and severity; we should all commend and extol as worthy of most affectionate veneration; how much more then shall we be so affected toward him, in whom we apprehend all those excellences to concur without any imperfection or allay? especially if by attention we impress those conceptions on our hearts; for how true and proper soever, if they be only slight and transient, they may not suffice to this intent; if they pass away as a flash, they will not be able to kindle in us any strong affection. But if such abstracted consideration of the divine perfections will not alone wholly avail, let us add hereto as a farther help toward the production and increase of this divine grace in us,

2. The consideration of God's works and actions; his works of nature, his acts of providence, his works and acts of grace; the careful meditating on these will be apt to breed, to nourish, to improve, and augment this affection. Even the contemplation of the lower works of nature, of this visible frame of things, (on which indeed many perspicuous characters of divine perfection, of immense power, of admirable wisdom, of abundant goodness are engraven,) hath in many minds excited a very high degree of reverence and good affection toward God: the devoutest persons (the holy psalmist particularly) we may observe frequent in this practice, inflaming their hearts with love, and elevating them in reverence toward God, by surveying the common works of God, by viewing and considering the magnificent vastness and variety, the goodly order and beauty, the constant duration and stability of those

things we see; in remarking the general bounty and munificence with which this great *Paterfamilias* hath provided for the necessary sustenance, for the convenience, for the defence, for the relief, for the delight and satisfaction of his creatures: even in the contemplation of these things being ravished with admiration and affection, how often do they thus exclaim: 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all.' 'The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord: the earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy! Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite: All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord;' with such reflexions, I say, on those common, yet admirable and excellent works of God (which we perhaps with a regardless eye unprofitably pass over) did those good men kindle and foment pious affections toward God. The same effect may also the considering the very common proceedings of divine providence beget in us; such as are discernible to every attentive mind both from history and daily experience; considering God's admirable condescension in regarding and ordering human affairs both for common benefit, and for relief of particular necessities, his supplying the general needs of men, relieving the poor, succoring the weak and helpless, protecting and vindicating the oppressed, his seasonable encouraging and rewarding the good, restraining and chastising the bad: even such observations are productive of love to God in those, who, according to that duty intimated by the prophet, 'do regard the works of the Lord, and consider the operations of his hands:' 'they who are wise, and will observe these things, they,' as the psalmist tells, 'shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord;' understand it practically, so as to be duly affected thereby; and so accordingly we find the consideration of these things applied by the great guides and patterns of our devotion. But especially the study and contemplation of those more high and rare proceedings of God, in managing his gracious design of our redemption from sin and misery, wherein a wisdom so unsearchable and a goodness so astonishing declare themselves, are most proper and effectual means of begetting divine love: if the consideration of God's eternal care for our welfare, of his descending to the lowest condition for our sake, of his willingly undertaking and pa-

tiently undergoing all kinds of inconvenience, of disgrace, of bitter pain and sorrow for us; of his freely offering us mercy, and earnestly wooing us to receive it, even when offenders, when enemies, when rebels against him; of his bearing with exceeding patience all our neglects of him, all our injuries towards him; of his preparing a treasure of perfect and endless bliss, and using all means possible to bring us unto the possession thereof; if, I say, considering those wonderful strains of goodness will not affect us, what can do it? How miserably cold and damp must our affections be, if all those powerful rays (so full of heavenly light and heat) shining through our minds cannot inflame them? how desperately hard and tough must our hearts be, if such incentives cannot soften and melt them? Is it not an apathy more than stoical, more than stony, which can stand immovable before so mighty inducements to passion? Is it not a horridly prodigious insensibility to think on such expressions of kindness without feeling affection reciprocal? But if the consideration of God's general and public beneficence will not touch us sufficiently, let us farther hereto adjoin,

3. Serious reflexions on the peculiar (personal or private) benefits by the divine goodness vouchsafed unto ourselves. There is, I suppose, scarce any man, who may not, if he be not very stupid and regardless, have observed, beside the common effects of God's universal care and bounty wherein he partakes, even some particular expressions and testimonies of divine favor dispensed unto him by God's hand, (apt to convince him of God's especial providence, care, and good-will to him particularly, and thereby to draw him unto God,) both in relation to his temporal and to his spiritual state; in preventing and preserving him from mischiefs imminent, in opportune relief, when he was pressed with want, or surprised by danger; in directing him to good, and diverting him from evil. Every man's experience, I say and suppose, will inform him that he hath received many such benefits from a hand, invisible indeed to sense, yet easily discernible, if he do attend to the circumstances wherein, to the seasons when they come; it is natural to every man being in distress, from which he cannot by any present or visible means extricate himself, to stretch forth his

hand and lift up his voice toward heaven, making his recourse to divine help; and it is as natural for God to regard the needs, to hearken to the cries, to satisfy the desires of such persons; for, 'The Lord is nigh to all that call on him: he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing: He will be a refuge to the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble: He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness: They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing: Look at the generations of old and see; did ever any trust in the Lord and was forsaken? or whom did he ever despise that called on him? This poor man (this, and that, any poor man,) cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles;' since then no man in all likelihood hath not some occasion of God's especial favor and assistance, and God is always so ready to afford them, we may reasonably presume that every man doth sometime receive them, and is thereby obliged to return a grateful affection to him, not only as to a common benefactor, but as to his particular friend and patron. However there is none of us who may not perceive himself singularly indebted to God's patience in forbearing to punish him, to his mercy in pardoning and passing over innumerable offences committed against him: the renowned penitent in the gospel did 'love much, because much was forgiven her:' and who is there of us, that hath not the same reason to love much? Who is there that, at least according to God's inclination and intention, hath not had much forgiven him? Whom have not 'the riches of divine goodness and long-suffering attended on in order to his repentance?' Who hath not been in so great degree ungrateful, unfruitful, and unprofitable, that he hath not abundant reason to acknowlege God's especial grace in bearing with him, and to confess with Jacob, that he is 'less than the least of all God's mercies?' If any such there were, he should have no less cause to be affected with the abundance of that grace, which so preserved him from sins and provocations. For if we stand, it is he that 'upholdeth us;' if we fall, it is he that 'raiseth us;' it is his especial favor that either we avoid sin, or sinning escape punishment. Now then God having by many real evidences declared such particular affection toward us, can we, considering thereon, do other-

wise than say to ourselves, after St. John, *Nos ergo diligamus Deum, quoniam prior dilexit nos;* 'Let us therefore love God, because God first loved us:' surely in all ingenuity, according to all equity, we are bound to do so; the reason and nature of things doth require it of us: all other loves, even those of the baser sort, are able to propagate themselves; (to continue and enlarge their kind;) are commonly fruitful and effectual in producing their like: how strangely then unnatural and monstrous is it, that this love only, this so vigorous and perfect love, should be barren and impotent as it were? 'If you love those that love you,' saith our Saviour, 'what reward have you?' (what reward can you pretend to for so common, so necessary a performance?) 'do not even the publicans do the same?' (the publicans, men not usually of the best natures, or tenderest hearts, yet they do thus.) And, again saith he, 'If you love those who love you, what thank is it? for even sinners love those that love them;' (sinners, men not led by conscience of duty, or regard to reason, but hurried with a kind of blind and violent force, by instinct of nature, do so much, go so far.) If thus men, both by nature and custom most untractable, the least guided by rules of right, of reason, of ingenuity; yea, not only the most barbarous men, but even the most savage beasts are sensible of courtesies, return a kind of affection unto them who make much of them, and do them good; what temper are we of, if all that bounty we experience cannot move us; if God's daily 'loading us with his benefits,' if his 'crowning us with loving-kindness and tender mercies,' if all those 'showers of blessings,' which he continually poureth down on our heads, do not produce some good degree of correspondent affection in us? It cannot surely proceed altogether from a wretched baseness of disposition, that we are so cold and indifferent in our affection toward God, or are sometimes so averse from loving him; it must rather in great part come from our not observing carefully, not frequently calling to mind, not earnestly considering what God hath done for us, how exceedingly we stand obliged to his goodness, from our following that untoward generation of men, who were not, it is said, 'mindful of the wonders which God did among them; who remembered not his hand, nor the day that he delivered them;' rather following, I

say, such careless and 'heartless people,' (so they are termed,) than imitating that excellent person's discretion, who constantly did 'set God's loving-kindness before his eyes,' who frequently did thus raise his mind, and rouse up his affections; 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases,' &c. It is not for want of the like experience, or the like obligation, but for want of the same wisdom, of the same care, of the same honest consideration and diligence, that we do not the like.

To these means I add that,

4. A special help to breed in us this holy disposition of soul will be the setting ourselves in good earnest, with a strong and constant resolution, to endeavor the performance of all our duty toward God, and keeping his commandments, although on inferior considerations of reason, such as we are capable of applying to this purpose; regards of fear, of hope, of desire to avoid the mischiefs arising from sin, or attaining the benefits ensuing on virtue. If we cannot immediately raise our hearts to that higher pitch of acting from that nobler principle of love, let us however apply that we can reach unto practice, striving as we are able to perform what God requires of us; exercising ourselves, as to material acts, in keeping a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; the doing which, as it may in time discover the excellency of goodness to our mind, so it will by degrees reconcile our affections thereto; then, by God's blessing, (who graciously regards the meanest endeavors toward good; who 'despiseth not the day of small things;' who will 'not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed,') from doing good out of a sober regard to our own welfare, we shall come to like it in itself, and consequently to love him, unto whose nature, and to whose will, it renders us conformable: for as doing ill breeds a dislike to goodness, and an aversation from him who himself is full thereof, and who rigorously exacts it of us; as a bad conscience removes expectation of good from God, and begets a suspicion of evil from him, consequently stifling all kindness toward him; so, doing well, we shall become acquainted with it, and friends thereto; a

hearty approbation, esteem, and good-liking thereof will ensue; finding by experience, that indeed the ways of wisdom, virtue, and piety are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; that the fruits of conscientious practice are health to our body and to our soul, security to our estate and to our reputation, rest in our mind, and comfort in our conscience: goodness will become precious in our eyes, and he who commends it to us, being himself essential goodness, will appear most venerable and most amiable, we shall then become disposed to render him, what we perceive he best deserves, intire reverence and affection.

5. But I commend farther, as a most necessary mean of attaining this disposition, assiduous earnest prayer unto God, that he would in mercy bestow it on us, and by his grace work it in us: which practice is indeed doubly conducible to this purpose; both in way of impetration, and by real efficacy: it will not fail to obtain it as a gift from God; it will help to produce it as an instrument of God's grace.

On the first account it is absolutely necessary; for it is from God's free representation of himself as lovely to our minds, and drawing our hearts unto him, (although ordinarily in the use of the means already mentioned, or some like to them,) that this affection is kindled; our bare consideration is too cold, our rational discourse too faint: we cannot sufficiently recollect our wandering thoughts, we cannot strongly enough impress those proper incentives of love on our hearts, (our hearts so damped with sensual desires, so clogged and pestered with earthly inclinations,) so as to kindle in our souls this holy flame; it can only be effected by a light shining from God, by a fire coming from heaven: as all others, so more especially this queen of graces must proceed from the Father of lights, and Giver of all good gifts: he alone, who is love, can be the parent of so goodly an offspring, can beget this lively image of himself within us: it is the principal 'fruit of God's Holy Spirit,' nor can it grow from any other root than from it; it is called the 'love of the Spirit,' as its most signal and peculiar effect: in fine, 'the love of God,' as St. Paul expressly teaches us, 'is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us;' given, but that not without asking, without

seeking; a grace so excellent, God, we may be assured, will not dispense, a gift so precious he will not bestow on them, who do not care to look after it, who will not vouchsafe to beg it: if we are not willing to acknowlege our want thereof; if we refuse to express our desire of it; if we will not show that we regard and value it; if, when God freely offers it, and invites us to receive it, (he doth so by offering his Holy Spirit, the fountain thereof, unto us,) we will not decently apply ourselves to him for it, how can we expect to obtain it? God hath propounded this condition, (and it is surely no hard, no grievous condition,) 'if we ask we shall receive;' he hath expressly promised that 'he will give his Spirit (his Spirit of love) to them who ask it:' we may be therefore sure, performing the condition duly, to obtain it; and as sure, neglecting that, we deserve to go without.

Prayer then is on this account a needful means; and it is a very profitable one on the score of its own immediate energy or virtue: for as by familiar converse (together with the delights and advantages attending thereon) other friendships are begot and nourished, so even by that acquaintance, as it were, with God, which devotion begets, by experience therein how sweet and good he is, this affection is produced and strengthened. As want of intercourse weakens and dissolves friendship; so if we seldom come at God, or little converse with him, it is not only a sign, but will be a cause of estrangement and disaffection toward him: according to the nature of the thing, prayer hath peculiar advantages above other acts of piety, to this effect: therein not only as in contemplation the eye of our mind (our intellectual part) is directed toward God; but our affections also (the hand of our soul by which we embrace good, the feet thereof by which we pursue it) are drawn out and fixed on him; we not only therein behold his excellences, but in a manner feel them and enjoy them; our hearts also being thereby softened and warmed by desire become more susceptive of love. We do in the performance of this duty approach nearer to God, and consequently God draws nearer to us, (as St. James assures: 'Draw near,' saith he, 'unto God, and he will draw near to you,') and thereby we partake more fully and strongly of his gracious influences; therein indeed

he most freely communicates his grace, therein he makes us most sensible of his love to us, and thereby disposeth us to love him again. I add, that true (fervent and hearty) prayer doth include and suppose some acts of love, or some near tendencies thereto; whence, as every habit is corroborated by acts of its kind, so by this practice divine love will be confirmed and increased. These are the means, which my meditation did suggest as conducing to the production and growth of this most excellent grace in our souls.

III. I should lastly propound some inducements apt to stir us up to the endeavor of procuring it, and to the exercise thereof, by representing to your consideration the blessed fruits and benefits (both by way of natural causality and of reward) accruing from it; as also the woful consequences and mischiefs springing from the want thereof. How being endued with it perfects and advances our nature, rendering it in a manner and degree divine, by resemblance to God, (who is full thereof, so full that he is called love,) by approximation, adherence, and union, in a sort, unto him: how it ennobles us with the most glorious alliance possible, rendering us the friends and favorites of the sovereign King and Lord of all, brethren of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; enriches us with a right and title to the most inestimable treasures, (those which 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive, which God hath prepared for them that love him,') a sure possession of the supreme good, of all that God is able to bestow, all whose wisdom and power, whose counsel and care it eternally engageth for our benefit; how all security and welfare, all rest and peace, all joy and happiness attend on it; for that 'the Lord preserveth all them that love him,' (preserveth them in the enjoyment of all good, in safety from all danger and mischief,) and that 'to those who love God all things co-operate for their good:' how incomparable a sweetness and delight accompany the practice thereof, far surpassing all other pleasures; perfectly able to content our minds, to sustain and comfort us even in the want of all other satisfactions, yea under the pressure of whatever most grievous afflictions can befal us. How contrariwise the want thereof will depress us into a state of greatest imperfection and baseness,

setting us at the greatest distance from God in all respects, both in similitude of nature, and as to all favorable regard or beneficial communication from him; casting us into a wretched and disgraceful consortship with the most degenerate creatures, the accursed fiends, who, for disaffection and enmity toward God, are banished from all happiness; how it extremely impoverisheth and beggareth us, divesting us of all right to any good thing, rendering us incapable of any portion, but that of utter darkness; how it excludeth us from any safety, any rest, any true comfort or joy, and exposeth us to all mischief and misery imaginable; all that being deprived of the divine protection, presence, and favor, being made objects of the divine anger, hatred, and severe justice, being abandoned to the malice of hell, being driven into utter darkness and eternal fire doth import or can produce. I should also have commended this love to you by comparing it with other loves, and showing how far in its nature, in its causes, in its properties, in its effects it excelleth them: even so far as the object thereof in excellency doth transcend all other objects of our affection; how this is grounded on the highest and surest reason; others on accounts very low and mean, commonly on fond humor and mistake; this produceth real, certain, immutable goods; others at best terminate only in goods apparent, unstable, and transitory; this is most worthy of us, employing all our faculties in their noblest manner of operation on the best object; others misbeseem us, so that in pursuing them we disgrace our understanding, misapply our desires, distemper our affections, mispend our endeavors. I should have enlarged on these considerations, and should have adjoined some particular advantages of this grace; as, for instance, that the procuring thereof is the most sure, the most easy, the most compendious way of attaining all others; of sweetening and ingratiating all obedience to us; of making the hardest yoke easy, and the heaviest burden light unto us. In fine, I should have wished you to consider that its practice is not only a mean and way to happiness, but our very formal happiness itself; the real enjoyment of the best good we are capable of; that in which alone heaven itself (the felicity of saints and angels) doth consist; which more than comprehends in itself all the benefits of

highest dignity, richest plenty, and sweetest pleasure. But I shall forbear entering on so ample and fruitful subjects of meditation, and conclude with that good Collect of our church:

'O Lord, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding; pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXV.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 39.

THE essential goodness of God towards man, in the frame of the world and the natural course of things, considered. Assurance of the same goodness arising from that common providence which continually upholds us, and relieves all our wants: also from the dispensations of grace, &c.; but from nothing more than from the nature and tendency of those laws which God has prescribed for the regulation of our lives.

And among all divine precepts, this of the text especially argues the wonderful goodness of our heavenly lawgiver, both in the manner of the proposal, and the substance of it. The manner of the proposal considered, affording, as it does, a mighty argument of immense goodness in God, that he doth in such a manner commend this duty to us, coupling it with our main duty towards him, and requiring us with like earnestness to love our neighbor as to love himself.

Nor, in the substance of this duty, is the benignity of him who prescribeth it less apparent. First, however, it is expedient to explain it as expressed in the text; wherein two particulars are considered; the object of the duty, *our neighbor;* and the qualification annexed to it, *as ourselves.*

I. The object of charity is *our neighbor;* that is, according to our Lord's exposition, or the tenor of his doctrine, every man with whom we have to do, especially every Christian. The law, as it was given to God's ancient people, was more confined. But now, such distinctions of men being abolished with *the wall of partition,* all the world is become one people,

subject to the laws of one common Lord: the blood of Christ hath cemented together all mankind, and we are now to all men, what one Jew was to another; yea more than such. Hereon therefore are grounded those evangelical commands explicatory of this law, as it now stands in force: this shown by various quotations. Such is the object of our charity; and thus did our Lord expound it to the Jewish lawyer, who asked, *who is my neighbor?*

With respect to the qualification, *as thyself*, this may import both a rule declaring the nature, and a measure determining the quantity of love due from us to our neighbor, the comparative term *as* implying either.

1. Loving our neighbor *as ourselves* imports a rule, directing what kind of love we should bear and exercise towards him. We cannot better understand the nature of this duty, than by reflecting on the motions of our own hearts, and observing the course of our demeanor towards ourselves; and this is a peculiar advantage of the rule, that by it we may easily and certainly discern all the particulars of our duty, without looking abroad, or having recourse to external instructions. Wherefore for our information concerning it, in all cases, we need only consult and interrogate ourselves; thence forming resolutions concerning our practice. Many such interrogatories proposed.

2. Loving our neighbor *as ourselves* imports also the measure of our love towards him; that it should be commensurate with, and equal in degree to that love which we bear and exercise towards ourselves. This is that perfection of charity to which our Lord bids us aspire, in the injunction, *be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect.* Several reasons given to show that this sense of the words is chiefly intended.

But farther, the duty thus interpreted is agreeable to reason, and may be justly required of us.

1. It is reasonable that we should love our neighbor *as*

ourselves, because he is as ourselves, or really in all considerable respects the same with us: this explained.

2. It is just that we should do so, because he really no less deserves our love. Justice is impartial, and regards things as they are in themselves; whence if our neighbor seem worthy of affection no less than we, it demands accordingly that we love him no less: this topic enlarged on.

3. It is fit that we should be obliged to this love, because all charity beneath self-love is defective, and all self-love above charity is excessive.

4. Equity requires it, because we are apt to claim the same measure of love from others.

5. It is needful that so great charity be prescribed, because none inferior to it will reach divers weighty ends designed in this law; viz. the general convenience and comfort of our lives in mutual intercourse and society.

6. That intire love which we owe to God our Creator, and to Christ our Redeemer, exacts from us no less a measure of charity than this.

7. Indeed the whole tenor and genius of our religion imply an obligation to this pitch of love on various accounts: these laid down.

8. Many conspicuous examples, proposed for our direction in this kind of practice, imply such a degree of charity as required of us. Instances quoted of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Jonathan, David, Elias, Jeremiah, and the other prophets, as well as the holy Apostles: the life of these last surveyed in this respect.

Finally, our Lord himself in our nature exemplified this duty; yea, by his practice he far outdid his precept: his great example dilated on to the end.

SERMON XXV.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 39.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

THE essential goodness of God, and his special benignity toward mankind, are to a considering mind divers ways very apparent; the frame of the world, and the natural course of things, do with a thousand voices loudly and clearly proclaim them to us; every sense doth yield us affidavit to that speech of the holy psalmist, 'the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord:' we see it in the glorious brightness of the skies, and in the pleasant verdure of the fields; we taste it in the various delicacies of food, supplied by land and sea; we smell it in the fragrances of herbs and flowers; we hear it in the natural music of the woods; we feel it in the comfortable warmth of heaven, and in the cheering freshness of the air; we continually do possess and enjoy it in the numberless accommodations of life, presented to us by the bountiful hand of nature.

Of the same goodness we may be well assured by that common providence which continually doth uphold us in our being, doth opportunely relieve our needs, doth protect us in dangers, and rescue us from imminent mischiefs, doth comport with our infirmities and misdemeanors; the which, in the divine psalmist's style, 'doth hold our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet

to be moved;' doth 'redeem our life from destruction;' doth 'crown us with loving-kindness, and tender mercies.'

The dispensations of grace, in the revelation of heavenly truth, in the overtures of mercy, in the succors of our weakness, in the proposal of glorious rewards, in all the methods and means conducing to our salvation, do afford most admirable proofs and pledges of the same immense benignity.

But in nothing is the divine goodness toward us more illustriously conspicuous, than in the nature and tendency of those laws which God hath been pleased, for the regulation of our lives, to prescribe unto us, all which do palpably evidence his serious desire and provident care of our welfare; so that, in imposing them, he plainly doth not so much exercise his sovereignty over us, as express his kindness toward us; neither do they more clearly declare his will, than demonstrate his good-will to us.

And among all divine precepts this especially, contained in my text, doth argue the wonderful goodness of our heavenly Lawgiver, appearing both in the manner of the proposal, and in the substance of it.

'The second,' saith our Lord, 'is like to it;' that is, to the precept of 'loving the Lord our God with all our heart:' and is not this a mighty argument of immense goodness in God, that he doth in such a manner commend this duty to us, coupling it with our main duty toward him, and requiring us with like earnestness to love our neighbor as to love himself?

He is transcendently amiable for the excellency of his nature; he, by innumerable and inestimable benefits graciously conferred on us, hath deserved our utmost affection; so that naturally there can be no obligation bearing any proportion or considerable semblance to that of loving him: yet hath he in goodness been pleased to create one, and to endue it with that privilege; making the love of a man (whom we cannot value but for his gifts, to whom we can owe nothing but what properly we owe to him) no less obligatory, to declare it near as acceptable as the love of himself, to whom we owe all. To him, as the sole author and free donor of all our good, by just correspondence, all our mind and heart, all our strength and

endeavor, are due: and reasonably might he engross them to himself, excluding all other beings from any share in them; so that we might be obliged only to fix our thoughts and set our affections on him, only to act directly for his honor and interest; saying with the holy psalmist, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee:' yet doth he freely please to impart a share of these performances on mankind; yet doth he charge us to place our affection on one another; to place it there, indeed, in a measure so large, that we can hardly imagine a greater; according to a rule, than which none can be devised more complete or certain.

O marvellous condescension, O goodness truly divine; which surpasseth the nature of things, which dispenseth with the highest right, and foregoeth the greatest interest that can be! Doth not God in a sort debase himself, that he might advance us? Doth he not appear to waive his own due, and neglect his own honor for our advantage? How otherwise could the love of man be capable of any resemblance to the love of God, and not stand at an infinite distance, or in an extreme disparity from it? How otherwise could we be obliged to affect or regard any thing beside the sovereign, the only goodness? How otherwise could there be any second or like to that first, that great, that peerless command, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart?'

This indeed is the highest commendation whereof any law is capable: for as to be like God is the highest praise that can be given to a person; so to resemble the divinest law of love to God is the fairest character that can be assigned of a law: the which indeed representeth it to be νόμος βασιλικὸς, as St. James calleth it; that is, a royal and sovereign law; exalted above all others, and bearing a sway on them. St. Paul telleth us, that the end of the commandment (or, the main scope of the evangelical doctrine) is 'charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;' that charity is the sum and substance of all other duties, and that 'he that loveth another hath fulfilled the whole law;' that charity is the chief of the theological virtues, and 'the prime fruit of the divine Spirit;' and 'the bond of perfection,' which combineth and consum-

mateth all other graces, and the general principle of all our doings. St. Peter enjoineth us that to all other virtues we 'add charity,' as the top and crown of them: and, 'Above all things,' saith he, 'have fervent charity among yourselves.' St. John calleth this law, in way of excellence, 'the commandment of God;' and our Lord himself claimeth it as his peculiar precept, 'This,' saith he, 'is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you;' 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another:' and maketh the observance of it the special cognisance of his followers, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.'

These indeed are lofty commendations thereof, yet all of them may worthily veil to this; all of them seem verified in virtue of this, because God hath vouchsafed to place this command in so near adjacency to the first great law, conjoining the two tables; making charity contiguous, and, as it were, commensurate to piety.

It is true that in many respects charity doth resemble piety; for it is the most genuine daughter of piety, thence in complexion, in features, in humor much favoring its sweet mother: it doth consist in like dispositions and motions of soul: it doth grow from the same roots and principles of benignity, ingenuity, equity, gratitude, planted in our original constitution by the breath of God, and improved in our hearts by the divine 'Spirit of love;' it produceth the like fruits of beneficence toward others, and of comfort in ourselves; it in like manner doth assimilate us to God, rendering us conformable to his nature, followers of his practice, and partakers of his felicity: it is of like use and consequence toward the regulation of our practice, and due management of our whole life: in such respects, I say, this law is like to the other; but it is however chiefly so for that God hath pleased to lay so great stress thereon, as to make it the other half of our religion and duty; or because, as St. John saith, 'This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also;' which is to his praise a most pregnant demonstration of his immense goodness toward us.

But no less in the very substance of this duty will the benignity of him that prescribeth it shine forth, displaying itself in the rare beauty and sweetness of it; together with the vast

benefit and utility, which it, being observed, will yield to mankind; which will appear by what we may discourse for pressing its observance. But first let us explain it, as it lieth before us expressed in the words of the text, wherein we shall consider two particulars observable: first, the object of the duty; secondly, the qualification annexed to it: the object of it, 'our neighbor;' the qualification, 'as ourselves.'

I. The object of charity is 'our neighbor;' that is, (it being understood, as the precept now concerneth us, according to our Lord's exposition, or according to his intent and the tenor of his doctrine) every man, with whom we have to do, or who is capable of our love, especially every Christian.

The law, as it was given to God's ancient people, did openly regard only those among them who were linked together in a holy neighborhood or society, from which all other men being excluded were deemed strangers and foreigners; ('aliens,' as St. Paul speaketh, 'from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise.'). For thus the law runneth in Leviticus, 'Thou shalt not bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;' where plainly Jews and neighbors are terms equivalent; other men being supposed to stand at distance without the fold or politic inclosure, which God by several ordinances had fenced, to keep that nation unmixt and separate: nor can it be excepted against this notion, that in the same chapter it is enjoined, 'But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself;' for by that stranger (as the Jewish masters will interpret it) is meant 'a proselyte of righteousness;' or one who, although a stranger by birth, was yet a brother in religion, having voluntarily submitted to their law, being engaged in the same covenant, and thence admitted to the same privileges, as an adopted child of that holy family.

But now, such distinctions of men being voided, and that 'wall of partition' demolished, all the world is become one people; subject to the laws of one common Lord; and capable of the mercies purchased by one Redeemer. God's love to mankind did move him to send our Lord into the world, to assume human nature, and therein to become a mediator be-

tween God and men. Our Lord's kindness to all his brethren disposed him to undertake their salvation, and to expiate their sins, and 'to taste death for every man;' the effect whereof is an universal reconciliation of God to the world, and an union of men together.

Now the blood of Christ hath cemented mankind; the favor of God embracing all hath approximated and combined all together; so that now every man is our brother, not only by nature, as derived from the same stock, but by grace, as partaker of the common redemption; now God 'desiring the salvation of all men,' and inviting all men to mercy, our duty must be coextended with God's grace, and our charity must follow that of our Saviour.

We are therefore now to all men, that which one Jew was to another; yea more than such, our Christianity having induced much higher obligations, stricter alliances, and stronger endearments, than were those whereby Judaism did engage its followers to mutual amity. The duties of common humanity (to which our natural frame and sense do incline us, which philosophy recommendeth and natural religion doth prescribe, being grounded on our community of nature and cognation of blood, on apparent equity, on general convenience and utility) our religion doth not only enforce and confirm, but enhance and improve; superadding higher instances and faster ties of spiritual relation, reaching in a sort to all men, (as being in duty, in design, in remote capacity our spiritual brethren;) but in especial manner to all Christians, who actually are fellow members of the same holy fraternity, contracted by spiritual regeneration from one heavenly seed, supported by a common faith and hope, strengthened by communion in acts of devotion and charity.

Hereon therefore are grounded those evangelical commands, explicatory of this law as it now standeth in force; that 'as we have opportunity we should do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith;' that we 'should abound in love one towards another, and towards all men;' that we 'should glorify God in our professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, by liberally distributing to the saints, and to all men;' that we should 'follow peace with all men,' should

'be patient toward all men;' and 'gentle toward all men,' and 'show all meekness toward all men;' and 'ever follow that which is good both among ourselves, and to all men;' that we should 'make supplications, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men,' especially for 'all saints,' or all our fellow Christians; and 'express moderation,' or ingenuity, 'to all men.'

Such is the object of our charity; and thus did our Lord himself expound it, when by a Jewish lawyer being put to resolve this question, 'And who is my neighbor?' he did propound a case, or history, whereby he did extort from that Rabbi this confession, that even a Samaritan, discharging a notable office of humanity and mercy to a Jew, did thereby most truly approve himself a good neighbor to him; and consequently that reciprocal performances of such offices were due from a Jew to a Samaritan; whence it might appear that this relation of neighborhood is universal and unlimited. So much for the object.

II. As for the qualification annexed and couched in those words, 'as thyself;' that, as I conceive, may import both a rule declaring the nature, and a measure determining the quantity, of that love which is due from us to our neighbor; the comparative term *as* implying both conformity or similitude, and commensuration or equality.

1. Loving our neighbor 'as ourselves' doth import a rule, directing what kind of love we should bear and exercise toward him; or informing us that our charity doth consist in having the same affections of soul, and in performing the same acts of beneficence toward him, as we are ready by inclination, as we are wont in practice to have or to perform toward ourselves, with full approbation of our judgment and conscience, apprehending it just and reasonable so to do.

We cannot indeed better understand the nature of this duty, than by reflecting on the motions of our own heart, and observing the course of our demeanor toward ourselves; for thence infallibly we may be assured how we should stand affected, and how we should behave ourselves toward others.

This is a peculiar advantage of this rule, (inferring the excellent wisdom and goodness of him who framed it,) that by it

very easily and certainly we may discern all the specialties of our duty, without looking abroad or having recourse to external instructions; so that by it we may be perfect lawgivers, and skilful judges, and faithful monitors to ourselves of what in any case we should do: for every one by internal experience knoweth what it is to love himself, every one is conscious how he useth to treat himself; each one consequently can prescribe and decide for himself, what he ought to do toward his neighbor: so that we are not only *θεοδίδακτοι*, 'taught of God,' as the Apostle saith, 'to love one another;' but *αὐτοδίδακτοι*, taught of ourselves how to exercise that duty: whence our Lord otherwhere doth propose the law of charity in these terms, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets;' that is, unto this rule all the special precepts of charity proposed in holy Scripture may be reduced.

Wherefore for information concerning our duty in each case and circumstance, we need only thus to consult and interrogate ourselves, hence forming resolutions concerning our practice.

Do we not much esteem and set by ourselves? Do we not strive to maintain in our minds a good opinion of ourselves? Can any mischances befalling us, any defects observable in us, any faults committed by us induce us to slight or despise ourselves?—This may teach us what regard and value we should ever preserve for our neighbor.

Do we not sincerely and earnestly desire our own welfare and advantage in every kind? Do we not heartily wish good success to our own designs and undertakings? Are we unconcerned or coldly affected in any case touching our own safety, our estate, our credit, our satisfaction or pleasure? Do we not especially, if we rightly understand ourselves, desire the health and happiness of our souls?—This doth inform us what we should wish and covet for our neighbor.

Have we not a sensible delight and complacency in our own prosperity? Do we ever repine at any advantages accruing to our person or condition? Are we not extremely glad to find ourselves thriving and florishing in wealth, in reputation, in any accommodation or ornament of our state? Especially if we be sober and wise, doth not our spiritual proficiency and improve-

ment in virtue yield joyous satisfaction to us? Are we not much comforted in apprehending ourselves to proceed in a hopeful way toward everlasting felicity?—This may instruct us what content we should feel in our neighbor's prosperity, both temporal and spiritual.

Do we not seriously grieve at our own disasters and disappointments? Are we not in sad dumps, whenever we incur any damage or disgrace? Do not our diseases and pains sorely afflict us? Do we not pity and bemoan ourselves in any want, calamity, or distress? Can we especially, if we are ourselves, without grievous displeasure apprehend ourselves enslaved to sin and Satan, destitute of God's favor, exposed to endless misery?—Hence may we learn how we should condole and commiserate the misfortunes of our neighbor.

Do we not eagerly prosecute our own concerns? Do we not with huge vigor and industry strive to acquire all conveniences and comforts to ourselves, to rid ourselves of all wants and molestations? Is our solicitous care or painful endeavor ever wanting toward the support and succor of ourselves in any of our needs? Are we satisfied in merely wishing ourselves well? are we not also busy and active in procuring what we affect? Especially, if we are well advised, do we not effectually provide for the weal of our soul, and supply of our spiritual necessities; laboring to rescue ourselves from ignorance and error, from the tyranny of sin, from the torture of a bad conscience, from the danger of hell?—This showeth how ready we should be really to further our neighbor's good, ministering to him all kinds of assistance and relief suitable to his needs, both corporal and spiritual.

Are we so proud or nice, that we disdain to yield attendance or service needful for our own sustenance or convenience? do we not indeed gladly perform the meanest and most sordid offices for ourselves?—This declareth how condescensive we should be in helping our neighbor, how ready even 'to wash his feet,' when occasion doth require.

Do we love to vex ourselves, or cross our own humor? do we not rather seek by all means to please and gratify ourselves?—This may warn us how innocent and inoffensive, how compliant and complacent we should be in our behavior toward

others; endeavoring 'to please them in all things,' especially 'for their good to edification.'

Are we easily angry with ourselves, do we retain implacable grudges against ourselves, or do we execute on ourselves mischievous revenge? are we not rather very meek and patient toward ourselves, mildly comporting with our own great weaknesses, our troublesome humors, our impertinences and follies; readily forgiving ourselves the most heinous offences, neglects, affronts, injuries, and outrages committed by us against our own interest, honor, and welfare?—Hence may we derive lessons of meekness and patience, to be exercised toward our neighbor, in bearing his infirmities and miscarriages, in remitting any wrongs or discourtesies received from him.

Are we apt to be rude in our deportment, harsh in our language, or rigorous in our dealing toward ourselves? do we not rather in word and deed treat ourselves very softly, very indulgently? Do we use to pry for faults, or to pick quarrels with ourselves, to carp at any thing said or done by us, rashly or on slight grounds to charge blame on ourselves, to lay heavy censures on our actions, to make foul constructions of our words, to blazon our defects, or aggravate our failings? do we not rather connive at and conceal our blemishes? do we not excuse and extenuate our own crimes?

Can we find in our hearts to frame virulent invectives, or to dart bitter taunts and scoffs against ourselves; to murder our own credit by slander, to blast it by detraction, to maim it by reproach, to prostitute it to be deflowered by jeering and scurrilous abuse? are we not rather very jealous of our reputation, and studious to preserve it, as a precious ornament, a main fence, a useful instrument of our welfare?

Do we delight to report, or like to hear ill stories of ourselves? do we not rather endeavor all we can to stifle them; to tie the tongues and stop the ears of men against them?—Hence may we be acquainted how civil and courteous in our behavior, how fair and ingenuous in our dealing, how candid and mild in our judgment or censure, we should be toward our neighbor; how very tender and careful we should be of anywise wronging or hurting his fame.

Thus reflecting on ourselves, and making our practice toward

ourselves the pattern of our dealing with others, we shall not fail to discharge what is prescribed to us in this law: and so we have here a rule of charity. But, farther,

2. Loving our neighbor as ourselves doth also import the measure of our love toward him; that it should be commensurate and equal in degree to that love which we bear and exercise toward ourselves. St. Peter once and again doth exhort us 'to love one another' ἐκτενῶς, 'with an outstretched affection:' and how far that affection should be stretched we are here informed; even that it should reach the farthest that can be, or to a parity with that intense love which we do bear in heart, and express in performance toward ourselves: so that we do either bring down our self-love to such a moderation, or raise up our charity to such a fervency, that both come to be adjusted in the same even level. This is that pitch at which we should aim and aspire; this is that perfection of charity, which our Lord recommendeth to us in that injunction, 'Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.'

That this sense of the words is included, yea chiefly intended, divers reasons will evince; for,

1. The most natural signification and common use of the phrase doth import thus much; and any one at first hearing would so understand the words.

2. It appeareth by comparing this precept with that to which it is annexed, 'of loving God with all our heart and all our soul;' which manifestly designeth the quantity and degree of that love: consequently the like determinaton is intended in this precept, which is expressed to resemble that, or designed in like manner to qualify and bound our duty toward our neighbor.

3. If the law doth not signify thus much, it doth hardly signify any thing; not at least any thing of direction or use to us; for no man is ignorant that he is obliged to love his neighbor, but how far that love must extend is the point wherein most of us do need to be resolved, and without satisfaction in which we shall hardly do any thing: for as he that oweth money will not pay except he can tell how much it is; so to know the duty will not avail toward effectual observance of it, if its measure be not fixed.

4. Indeed, the law otherwise understood will rather be apt to misguide than to direct us; inducing us to apprehend that we shall satisfy its intent, and sufficiently discharge our duty, by practising charity in any low degree or mean instance. Also,

5. The former sense, which is unquestionable, doth infer and establish this; because similitude of love, morally speaking, cannot consist with inequality thereof; for if in considerable degrees we love ourselves more than others, assuredly we shall fail both in exerting such internal acts of affection, and in performing such external offices of kindness toward them, as we do exert and perform in regard to ourselves; whence this law, taken merely as a rule, demanding a confused and imperfect similitude of practice, will have no clear obligation or certain efficacy.

6. But farther to assure this exposition, I shall declare that the duty thus interpreted is agreeable to reason, and may justly be required of us on considerations, which together will serve to press the observance of it according to such measure.

1. It is reasonable that we should thus love our neighbor as ourselves, because he is as ourselves, or really in all considerable respects the same with us: we concur with him in all that is necessary, substantial, and stable; we differ from him only in things contingent, circumstantial, and variable; in the which, of course or by chance we are liable in a small time as much to differ from ourselves: in such respects we are not the same to-day that we were yesterday, and shall be to-morrow; for we shift our circumstances as we do our clothes; our bodies are in continual flux, and our souls do much conform to their alteration; our temper and complexion do vary with our air, our diet, our conversation, our fortunes, our age; our parts grow and decay, our principles and judgments, our affections and desires are never fixed, and seldom rest long in the same place; all our outward state doth easily change face; so that if we consider the same person in youth and in age, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in distress, may we not say, *quantum mutatus ab illo*; how quite another man is he grown! Yet shall a man for such alterations surcease or abate his love to himself?—Why then in regard to the like differences shall

we less affect our neighbor, who is endowed with that common nature, which alone through all those vicissitudes sticketh fast in us; who is the most express image of us, (or rather a copy, drawn by the same hand, of the same original,) another self, attired in a diverse garb of circumstances? Do we not, so far as we despise or disaffect him, by consequence slight or hate ourselves; seeing (except bare personality, or I know not what metaphysical identity) there is nothing in him different from what is, or what may be in us?

2. It is just that we should love our neighbor equally with ourselves, because he really no less deserveth love, or because on a fair judgment he will appear equally amiable. Justice is impartial, and regardeth things as they are in themselves, abstracting from their relation to this or that person; whence, if our neighbor seem worthy of affection no less than we, it demandeth that accordingly we should love him no less.

And what ground can there be of loving ourselves, which may not as well be found in others? Is it endowments of nature, is it accomplishments of knowlege, is it ornaments of virtue, is it accoutrements of fortune? But is not our neighbor possessed of the same? is he not at least capable of them, the collation and acquist of them depending on the same arbitrary bounty of God, or on faculties and means commonly dispensed to all? May not any man at least be as wise and as good as we? Why then should we not esteem, why not affect him as much? Doth relation to us alter the case? is self as self lovely or valuable? doth that respect lend any worth or price to things?

Likewise, what more can justice find in our neighbor to obstruct or depress our love than it may observe in ourselves? hath he greater infirmities or defects, is he more liable to errors and miscarriages, is he guilty of worse faults than we? If without arrogance and vanity we cannot affirm this, then are we as unworthy of love as he can be; and refusing any degree thereof to him, we may as reasonably withdraw the same from ourselves.

3. It is fit that we should be obliged to love our neighbor equally with ourselves, because all charity beneath self-love is defective, and all self-love above charity is excessive.

It is an imperfect charity which doth not respect our neighbor according to his utmost merit and worth, which doth not heartily desire his good, which doth not earnestly promote his advantage in every kind, according to our ability and opportunity: and what beyond this can we do for ourselves?

If in kind or degree we transcend this, it is not virtuous love or true friendship to ourselves, but a vain fondness or perverse dotage; proceeding from inordinate dispositions of soul, grounded on foolish conceits, begetting foul qualities and practices; envy, strife, ambition, avarice, and the like.

4. Equity requireth that we should love our neighbor to this degree, because we are apt to claim the same measure of love from others. No mean respect or slight affection will satisfy us; we cannot brook the least disregard or coldness; to love us a little is all one to us as not to love us at all: it is therefore equitable that we should be engaged to the same height of charity toward others; otherwise we should be allowed in our dealings to use double weights and measures, which is plain iniquity: what indeed can be more ridiculously absurd than that we should pretend to receive that from others, which we are not disposed to yield to them on the same ground and title?

5. It is needful that so great a charity should be prescribed, because none inferior thereto will reach divers weighty ends designed in this law; namely, the general convenience and comfort of our lives in mutual society and intercourse: for if in considerable degree we do affect ourselves beyond others, we shall be continually bickering and clashing with them about points of interest and credit; scrambling with them for what may be had, and clambering to get over them in power and dignity: whence all the passions annoying our souls, and all the mischiefs disturbing our lives, must needs ensue.

6. That intire love which we owe to God our Creator, and to Christ our Redeemer, doth exact from us no less a measure of charity than this: for seeing they have so clearly demonstrated themselves to bear an immense love to men, and have charged us therein to imitate them; it becometh us, in conformity, in duty, in gratitude to them, to bear the highest we can, that is, the same as we bear to ourselves: for how can we

love God enough, or with all our soul, if we do not accord with him in loving his friends and relations, his servants, his children, with most intire affection?

If in God's judgment they are equal to us, if in his affection and care they have an equal share, if he in all his dealings is indifferent and impartial toward all; how can our judgment, our affection, our behaviour be right, if they do not conspire with him in the same measures?

7. Indeed the whole tenor and genius of our religion do imply obligation to this pitch of charity on various accounts.

It representeth all worldly goods and matters of private interest as very inconsiderable and unworthy of our affection, thereby subtracting the fuel of immoderate self-love.

It enjoineth us for all our particular concerns intirely to rely on Providence; so barring solicitude for ourselves, and disposing an equal care for others.

It declareth every man so weak, so vile, so wretched, so guilty of sin and subject to misery, (so for all good wholly indebted to the pure grace and mercy of God,) that no man can have reason to dote on himself or to prefer himself before others: we need not cark, or prog, or scrape for ourselves, being assured that God sufficiently careth for us.

In its account the fruits and recompenses of love to others in advantage to ourselves do far surpass all present interests and enjoyments: whence in effect the more or less we love others, answerably the more or less we love ourselves; so that charity and self-love become coincident, and both run together evenly in one channel.

It recommendeth to us the imitation of God's love and bounty; which are absolutely pure, without any regard, any capacity of benefit redounding to himself.

It commandeth us heartily to love even our bitterest enemies and most cruel persecutors; which cannot be performed without a proportionable abatement of self-love.

It chargeth us not only freely to impart our substance, but willingly to expose our lives, for the good of our brethren: in which case charity doth plainly match self-love; for what hath a man more dear or precious than his life to lay out for himself?

It representeth all men (considering their divine extraction, and being formed after God's image; their designation for eternal glory and happiness, their partaking of the common redemption by the undertakings and sufferings of Christ, their being objects of God's tender affection and care) so very considerable, that no regard beneath the highest will befit them.

It also declareth us so nearly allied to them, and so greatly concerned in their good, (we being 'all one in Christ,' and 'members one of another,') that we ought to have a perfect complacency in their welfare, and a sympathy in their adversity, as our own.

It condemneth self-love, self-pleasing, self-seeking as great faults; which yet (even in the highest excess) do not seem absolutely bad; or otherwise culpable, than as including partiality, or detracting from that equal measure of charity which we owe to others: for surely we cannot love ourselves too much, if we love others equally with ourselves; we cannot seek our own good excessively, if with the same earnestness we seek the good of others.

It exhibiteth supernatural aids of grace, and conferreth that holy spirit of love, which can serve to no meaner purposes, than to quell that sorry principle of niggardly selfishness, to which corrupt nature doth incline; and to enlarge our hearts to this divine extent of goodness.

8. Lastly, many conspicuous examples, proposed for our direction in this kind of practice, do imply this degree of charity to be required of us.

It may be objected to our discourse, that the duty thus understood is unpracticable, nature violently swaying to those degrees of self-love which charity can nowise reach. This exception (would time permit) I should assoil, by showing how far, and by what means we may attain to such a practice; (how at least, by aiming at this top of perfection, we may ascend nearer and nearer thereto:) in the mean time experience doth sufficiently evince possibility; and assuredly that may be done, which we see done before us. And so it is, pure charity hath been the root of such affections and such performances (recorded by indubitable testimony) toward others, which

hardly any man can exceed in regard to himself: nor indeed hath there scarce ever appeared any heroical virtue, or memorable piety, whereof charity overbearing selfishness, and sacrificing private interest to public benefit, hath not been a main ingredient. For instance then;

Did not Abraham even prefer the good of others before his own, when he gladly did quit his country, patrimony, friends, and kindred, to pass his days in a wandering pilgrimage, on no other encouragement than an overture of blessing on his posterity?

Did not the charity of Moses stretch thus far, when for the sake of his brethren he voluntarily did exchange the splendors and delights of a court for a condition of vagrancy and servility; 'choosing rather,' as the Apostle speaketh, 'to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin?' did not it overstretch, when (although having been grievously affronted by them) he wished that rather his name should be 'expunged from God's book,' than that their sin should abide unpardoned?

Did not Samuel exercise such a charity, when being ingratefully and injuriously dismounted from his authority, he did yet retain toward that people a zealous desire of their welfare, 'not ceasing earnestly to pray for them?'

Did not Jonathan love David equally with himself, when for his sake he chose to incur the displeasure of his father and his king; when for his advantage he was content to forfeit the privilege of his birth, and the inheritance of a crown; when he could without envy or grudge look on the growing prosperity of his supplanter, could heartily wish his safety, could effectually protect it, could purchase it to him with his own great danger and trouble: when he, that in gallantry of courage and virtue did yield to none, was yet willing to become inferior to one born his subject, one raised from the dust, one 'taken from a sheepcote;' so that unrepiningly and without disdain he could say, 'Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee?'—are not these pregnant evidences that it was truly said in the story, 'The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul?'

Did not the psalmist competently practise this duty, when in

the sickness of his ingrateful adversaries 'he clothed himself with sackcloth, he humbled his soul with fasting; he bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother?'

Were not Elias, Jeremy, and other prophets as much concerned for the good of their countrymen as for their own, when they took such pains, when they ran such hazards, when they endured such hardships not only for them, but from them; being requited with hatred and misusage for endeavoring to reclaim them from sin, and stop them from ruin?

May not the holy Apostles seem to have loved mankind beyond themselves, when for its instruction and reformation, for reconciling it to God, and procuring its salvation, they gladly did undertake and undergo so many rough difficulties, so many formidable dangers, such irksome pains and troubles, such extreme wants and losses, such grievous ignominies and disgraces; slighting all concerns of their own, and relinquishing whatever was most dear to them (their safety, their liberty, their ease, their estate, their reputation, their pleasure, their very blood and breath) for the welfare of others; even of those who did spitefully malign and cruelly abuse them?

Survey but the life of one among them; mark the wearisome travels he underwent over all the earth, the solicitous cares which did possess his mind 'for all the churches:' the continual toils and drudgeries sustained by him in preaching by word and writing, in visiting, in admonishing, in all pastoral employments; the imprisonments, the stripes, the reproaches, the oppositions and persecutions of every kind, and from all sorts of people, which he suffered; the pinching wants, the desperate hazards, the lamentable distresses with the which he did ever conflict: peruse those black catalogues of his afflictions registered by himself; then tell me how much his charity was inferior to his self-love? did not at least the one vie with the other, when he, for the benefit of his disciples, was content 'to be absent from the Lord,' or suspended from a certain fruition of glorious beatitude; resting in this uncomfortable state, in 'this fleshly tabernacle' wherein 'he groaned, being burdened,' and longing for enlargement? Did he not somewhat beyond himself love those men, for whose salvation he wished

himself 'accursed from Christ,' or debarred from the assured enjoyment of eternal felicity; those very men by whom he had been stoned, had been scourged, had been often beaten to extremity, from whom he had received manifold indignities and outrages?

Did not they love their neighbors as themselves, who sold their possessions, and distributed the prices of them for relief of their indigent brethren? Did not most of the ancient saints and fathers mount near the top of this duty, of whom it is by unquestionable records testified that they did freely bestow all their private estate and substance on the poor, devoting themselves to the service of God and edification of his people? Finally,

Did not our Lord himself in our nature exemplify this duty, yea by his practice far outdo his precept? For, he who from the brightest glories, from the immense riches, from the ineffable joys and felicities of his celestial kingdom, did willingly stoop down to assume the garb of a servant, to be clothed with the infirmities of flesh, to become 'a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief:' he who for our sake vouchsafed to live in extreme penury and disgrace, to feel hard want, sore travail, bitter persecution, most grievous shame and anguish: he who not only did contentedly bear, but purposely did choose to be accused, to be slandered, to be reviled, to be mocked, to be tortured, to pour forth his heart-blood on a cross, for the sake of an unprofitable, an unworthy, an impious, an ingrateful generation; for the salvation of his open enemies, of base apostates, of perverse rebels, of villainous traitors: he who, in the height of his mortal agonies, did sue for the pardon of his cruel murderers; who did send his Apostles to them, did cause so many wonders to be done before them, did furnish all means requisite to convert and save them; he that acted and suffered all this, and more than can be expressed, with perfect frankness and good-will; did he not signally love his neighbor as himself, to the utmost measure? did not in him virtue conquer nature, and charity triumph over self-love? This he did to seal and impress his doctrine; to show us what we should do, and what we can do by his grace; to oblige us and to encourage us unto a conformity with him in this respect; for, 'Walk in love,' saith the Apostle, 'as

Christ hath also loved us, and hath given himself for us;' and 'This,' saith he himself, 'is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you;' and how can I better conclude than in the recommendation of such an example?

'Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXVI.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 39.

OBJECT of the preceding discourse stated: time did not then permit the consideration of an exception, to which the text, applied as a measure of our charity, is liable: namely, that in this case the precept will prove impracticable, such a love being romantic and imaginary; since who does, or who can love his neighbor in this degree? Nature and common sense seem to forbid it, &c. In answer to this objection it is said; Be it so, that we cannot attain to this degree of love; yet it may be reasonable that we should be enjoined to do so: reasons for this stated. But neither is the performance of this task so impossible or so desperately hard, if we take the right course and use the right means: for, 1. be it considered that we may be mistaken in our account, when we look on the impossibility or difficulty of this duty, before we have seriously attempted it: many things, very difficult at the first attempt, become easy by practice: instances given. 2. Let us consider that, in some respects and in divers instances, *it is* very feasible to love our neighbor as ourselves: instances of this given.

3. We see men inclined by other principles to act as much or more for the sake of others, than they would for themselves: instances of patriots and friends. 4. Those dispositions of soul which usually with so much violence thwart the observance of this precept, are not ingredients of true self-love, by the which we are directed to regulate our charity, but a spurious brood of our folly and pravity, which imply not a sober love of ourselves: this point enlarged on.

5. Indeed, we may farther consider that our nature is not so absolutely averse to the practice of such charity, as those may think who view it slightly, either in some particular instances, or in ordinary practice. Man having received his soul from the breath of God, and being framed after his image, there do yet abide in him some features resembling the divine original: this shown by our natural sympathy with distress and misery, by our admiration of pure benevolence, and contempt of sordid selfishness, &c.

6. But supposing the inclinations of a depraved nature do so mightily obstruct the performance of this duty in the degree specified, yet we must remember that a subsidiary power is by the divine mercy dispensed to us, able to control and subdue nature, and raise our faculties far above their natural force.

7. There are divers means conducive to the abatement of this difficulty, the issue of which may be safely referred to the due trial of them.

1. Let us carefully weigh the value of those things which immoderate self-love affects in prejudice to charity, together with the worth of those which charity sets in balance to them.

2. Let us also consider our real state in the world, in dependence on the pleasure and providence of Almighty God: the thought that we are members of one commonwealth, and of the church, under the government and patronage of God, may disengage us from immoderate respect to private good, and incline us to promote the common welfare.

3. There is one plain way of rendering this duty possible; which is, to make the welfare of our neighbor to be our own: which if we can do, then may we easily desire it seriously, and promote it with the greatest zeal; for then it will be an instance of self-love to exercise charity. Nor is this an imaginary cause, but one grounded in reason: this point explained:

and that it is practicable experience may confirm: this point also enlarged on.

4. It will greatly conduce to the perfect observance of this rule, if we studiously contemplate ourselves, strictly examining our conscience, and seriously reflecting on our unworthiness and vileness. If we do so, what place can there be for that vanity, arrogance, partiality, and injustice, which are the sources of immoderate self-love?

5. Lastly, we may from conspicuous examples and experiments be assured that such a practice of this duty is not impossible.

SERMON XXVI.

OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOR.

MATTHEW, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 39.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

I HAVE formerly discoursed on these words, and then showed how they do import two observable particulars: first, a rule of our charity, or that it should be like in nature; then a measure of it, or that it should be equal in degree to the love which we do bear to ourselves. Of this latter interpretation I did assign divers reasons, urging the observance of the precept according to that notion: but one material point, scantiness of time would not allow me to consider; which is the removal of an exception, to which that interpretation is very liable, and which is apt to discourage from a serious application to the practice of this duty so expounded.

If, it may be said, the precept be thus understood, as to oblige us to love our neighbors equally with ourselves, it will prove unpracticable, such a charity being merely romantic and imaginary; for who doth, who can, love his neighbor in this degree? Nature powerfully doth resist, common sense plainly doth forbid that we should do so: a natural instinct doth prompt us to love ourselves, and we are forcibly driven thereto by an unavoidable sense of pleasure and pain, resulting from the constitution of our body and soul, so that our own least good or evil are very sensible to us: whereas we have no such potent inclination to love others; we have no sense or a very faint one of what another doth enjoy or endure: doth not there-

fore nature plainly suggest that our neighbor's good cannot be so considerable to us as our own? especially when charity doth clash with self-love, or when there is a competition between our neighbor's interest and our own, is it possible that we should not be partial to our own side? Is not therefore this precept such as if we should be commanded to fly, or to do that which natural propension will certainly hinder?

In answer to this exception I say, first,

1. Be it so, that we can never attain to love our neighbor altogether so much as ourselves, yet may it be reasonable that we should be enjoined to do so; for

Laws must not be depressed to our imperfection, nor rules bent to our obliquity; but we must ascend toward the perfection of them, and strive to conform our practice to their exactness. If what is prescribed be according to the reason of things just and fit, it is enough, although our practice will not reach it; for what remaineth may be supplied by repentance and humility in him that should obey, by mercy and pardon in him that doth command.

In the prescription of duty it is just that what may be required, even in rigor, should be precisely determined, though in execution of justice or dispensation of recompense consideration may be had of our weakness; whereby both the authority of our governor may be maintained, and his clemency glorified.

It is of great use that by comparing the law with our practice, and in the perfection of the one discerning the defect of the other, we may be humbled, may be sensible of our impotency, may thence be forced to seek the helps of grace, and the benefit of mercy.

Were the rule never so low, our practice would come beneath it; it is therefore expedient that it should be high, that at least we may rise higher in performance than otherwise we should do: for the higher we aim, the nearer we shall go to the due pitch; as he that aimeth at heaven, although he cannot reach it, will yet shoot higher than he that aimeth only at the house-top.

The height of duty doth prevent sloth and decay in virtue, keeping us in wholesome exercise and in continual improve-

ment, while we be always climbing toward the top, and straining unto farther attainment: the sincere prosecution of which course, as it will be more profitable unto us, so it will be no less acceptable to God, than if we could thoroughly fulfil the law: for in judgment God will only reckon on the sincerity and earnestness of our endeavor; so that if we have done our best, it will be taken as if we had done all. 'Our labor will not be lost in the Lord;' for the degrees of performance will be considered, and he that hath done his duty in part shall be proportionably recompensed; according to that of St. Paul, 'Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own work.' Hence sometimes we are enjoined to 'be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect,' and to be 'holy as God is holy:' otherwhile to 'go on to perfection,' and to 'press toward the mark;' which precepts in effect do import the same thing; but the latter implieth the former, although in attainment impossible, yet in attempt very profitable: and surely he is likely to write best, who proposeth to himself the fairest copy for his imitation.

In fine, if we do act what is possible, or as we can do conform to the rule of duty, we may be sure that no impossibility of this, or of any other sublime law, can prejudice us.

I say, of any other law; for it is not only this law to which this exception may be made, but many others, perhaps every one evangelical law, are alike repugnant to corrupt nature, and seem to surmount our ability.

But neither is the performance of this task so impossible, or so desperately hard, (if we take the right course, and use proper means toward it,) as is supposed: as may somewhat appear, if we will weigh the following considerations.

1. Be it considered that we may be mistaken in our account, when we do look on the impossibility or difficulty of such a practice, as it appeareth at present, before we have seriously attempted, and in a good method, by due means, earnestly labored to achieve it: for many things cannot be done at first, or with a small practice, which by degrees and a continued endeavor may be effected; divers things are placed at a distance, so that without passing through the interjacent way we cannot arrive at them; divers things seem hard before trial,

which afterward prove very easy: it is impossible to fly up to the top of a steeple, but we may ascend thither by steps; we cannot get to Rome without crossing the seas, and travelling through France or Germany; it is hard to comprehend a subtile theorem in geometry, if we pitch on it first; but if we begin at the simple principles, and go forward through the intermediate propositions, we may easily attain a demonstration of it: it is hard to swim, to dance, to play on an instrument; but a little trial, or a competent exercise will render those things easy to us: so may the practice of this duty seem impossible, or insuperably difficult, before we have employed divers means, and voided divers impediments; before we have inured our minds and affections to it; before we have tried our forces in some instances thereof, previous to others of a higher strain, and nearer the perfection of it.

If we would set ourselves to exercise charity in those instances, whereof we are at first capable without much reluctancy, and thence proceed toward others of a higher nature, we may find such improvement, and taste such content therein, that we may soon arise to incredible degrees thereof; and at length perhaps we may attain to such a pitch, that it will seem to us base and vain to consider our own good before that of others, in any sensible measure; and that nature which now so mightily doth contest in favor of ourselves, may in time give way to a better nature, born of custom, affecting the good of others. Let not therefore a present sense or experience raise in our minds a prejudice against the possibility or practicableness of this duty.

2. Let us consider that in some respects and in divers instances it is very feasible to love our neighbor no less than ourselves.

We may love our neighbor truly and sincerely, 'out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned,' as St. Paul doth prescribe; or according to St. Peter's injunction, 'from a pure heart love one another fervently:' and in this respect we can do no more toward ourselves; for truth admitteth no degrees, sincerity is a pure and complete thing, exclusive of all mixture or alloy.

And as to external acts at least it is plain that charity toward

others may reach self-love; for we may be as serious, as vigorous, as industrious in acting for our neighbor's good, as we can be in pursuing our own designs and interests: for reason easily can manage and govern external practice; and common experience showeth the matter to this extent practicable, seeing that often men do employ as much diligence on the concerns of others, as they can do on their own, (being able to do no more than their best in either case:) wherefore in this respect charity may vie with selfishness; and practising thus far may be a step to mount higher.

Also rational consideration will enable us to perform some interior acts of charity in the highest degree; for if we do but (as without much difficulty we may do) apply our mind to weigh the qualities and the actions of our neighbor, we may thence obtain a true opinion and just esteem of him; and, secluding gross folly or flattery of ourselves, how can we in that respect or instance be more kind or benign to ourselves?

Is it not also within the compass of our ability to repress those passions of soul, the eruption whereof tendeth to the wrong, damage, and offence of our neighbor; in regard to which practice St. Paul affirmeth that the law may be fulfilled: 'Love,' saith he, 'worketh no evil to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law?' And what more in this respect can we perform for ourselves?

3. We may consider that commonly we see men inclined by other principles to act as much or more for the sake of others, than they would for themselves.

Moral honesty hath inclined some, ambition and popularity have excited others, to encounter the greatest dangers, to attack the greatest difficulties, to expose their safety, to sacrifice their lives, for the welfare of their country.*

Common friendship hath often done as much, and brutish love (that 'mad friendship,' as Seneca calleth it) commonly doeth far more: for what will not a fond lover undertake and achieve for his minion, although she really be the worst enemy he can have? yet for such a snake will he not lavish his estate,

* Ἀληθὲς δὲ τὸ περὶ τοῦ σπουδαίου, καὶ τὸ τῶν φίλων ἕνεκα πολλὰ πράττειν καὶ τῆς πατρίδος, κἂν δέῃ ὑπεραποθνήσκειν.—Arist. Eth. ix. 8.

prostitute his honor, abandon his ease, hazard his safety, shipwreck his conscience, forfeit his salvation? What may not a Delilah obtain of her Samson, a Cleopatra of her Antony, how prejudicial soever it be to his own interest and welfare?

Why then may not a principle of charity, grounded on so much better reason, and backed by so much stronger motives, be conceived able to engage men to the like practice? why may not a man be disposed to do that out of a hearty goodwill, which he can do out of vain conceit, or vicious appetite? why shall other forces overbear nature, and the power of charity be unable to match it?

4. Let us consider that those dispositions of soul which usually with so much violence do thwart the observance of this precept, are not ingredients of true self-love, by the which we are directed to regulate our charity; but a spurious brood of our folly and pravity, which imply not a sober love of ourselves, but a corrupt fondness toward an idol of our fancy mistaken for ourselves.

A high conceit of our worth or ability, of our fortune or worldly state, of our works and achievements; a great complacence or confidence in some endowment or advantage belonging to us, a stiff adherence to our own will or humor, a greedy appetite to some particular interest or base pleasure; these are those, not attendants of natural self-love, but issues of unnatural depravedness in judgment and affections, which render our practice so exorbitant in this regard, making us seem to love ourselves so immoderately, so infinitely; so contracting our souls, and drawing them inwards, that we appear indisposed to love our neighbor in any considerable degree: if these (as by serious consideration they may be) were avoided, or much abated, it would not be found so grievous a matter to love our neighbor as ourselves; for that sober love remaining behind, to which nature inclineth, and which reason approveth, would rather help to promote than yield any obstacle to our charity: if such perverse selfishness were checked and depressed, and natural kindness cherished and advanced, then true self-love and charity would compose themselves into near a just poise.

5. Indeed (which we may farther consider) our nature is not

so absolutely averse or indisposed to the practice of such charity, as to those may seem who view it slightly, either in some particular instances, or in ordinary practice: nature hath furnished us with strong instincts for the defence and sustenance of our life; and common practice is depraved by ill education and custom: these some men poring on do imagine no room left for charity in the constitution of men; but they consider not that one of these may be so moderated, and the other so corrected, that charity may have a fair scope in men's hearts and practice; and they slip over divers pregnant marks of our natural inclination thereto.

Man having received his soul from the breath of God, and being framed after the image of his most benign parent, there do yet abide in him some features resembling God, and relics of the divine original; there are in us seeds of ingenuity, of equity, of pity, of benignity, which being cultivated by sober consideration and good use, under the conduct and aid of heavenly grace, will produce noble fruits of charity.

The frame of our nature so far disposeth us thereto, that our bowels are touched with sensible pain on the view of any calamitous object: our fancy is disturbed at the report of any disaster befalling any person; we can hardly see or read a tragedy without motions of compassion.

The practice of benignity, of courtesy, of clemency at first sight, without any discursive reflexion, doth obtain approbation and applause from us; being no less grateful and amiable to the mind than beauty to our eyes, harmony to our ears, fragrancy to our smell, and sweetness to our palate: and to the same mental sense malignity, cruelty, harshness, all kinds of uncharitable dealing are very disgustful and loathsome.

There wanteth not any commendation to procure a respect for charity, nor any invective to breed abhorrence of uncharitableness; nature sufficiently prompting to favor the one, and to detest the other.

The practice of the former in common language hath ever been styled humanity; and the disposition from whence it floweth is called good-nature: the practice of the latter is likewise termed inhumanity, and its source ill-nature; as thwarting the common notions and inclinations of mankind, divest-

ing us of our manhood, and rendering us a sort of monsters among men.

No quality hath a clearer repute, or is commonly more admired, than generosity, which is a kind of natural charity, or hath a great spice thereof: no disposition is more despised among men than niggardly selfishness; whence commonly men are ashamed to avow self-interest as a principle of their actions, (rather fathering them on some other cause,) as being conscious to themselves that it is the basest of all principles.

Whatever the censurers and detractors of human nature do pretend, yet even themselves do admire pure beneficence, and contemn selfishness; for if we look to the bottom of their intent, it is hence they are bent to slander mankind as void of good nature, because out of malignity they would not allow it a quality so excellent and divine.

Wherefore, according to the general judgment and conscience of men, (to omit other considerations,) our nature is not so averse from charity, or destitute of propensions thereto; and therefore cherishing the natural seeds of it, we may improve it to higher degrees.

6. But supposing the inclinations of nature, as it now standeth in its depraved and crazy state, do so mightily obstruct the practice of this duty in the degree specified, so that however we cannot by any force of reason or philosophy attain to desire so much or relish so well the good of others as our own; yet we must remember that a subsidiary power is by the divine mercy dispensed, able to control and subdue nature to a compliance, to raise our practice above our natural forces. We have a like averseness to other spiritual duties, (to the loving God with all our hearts, to the mortifying our flesh and carnal desires, to the contempt of worldly things, and placing our happiness in spiritual goods;) yet we are able to perform them by the succor of grace, and in virtue of that omnipotency which St. Paul assumed to himself when he said, 'I can do all things by Christ enabling me.'

If we can get 'the spirit of love,' (and assuredly we may get it, if we carefully will seek it, with constant fervency imploring it from him, who hath promised to bestow it on those that

ask it,) it will infuse into our minds that light, whereby we shall discern the excellency of this duty, together with the folly and baseness of that selfishness which crosseth it; it will kindle in our hearts charitable affections, disposing us to wish all good to our neighbor, and to feel pleasure therein; it will render us 'partakers of that divine nature,' which so will guide and urge us in due measure to affect the benefit of others, as now corrupt nature doth move us unmeasurably to covet our own; being supported and elevated by its virtue, we may, surmounting the clogs of fleshly sense and conceit, soar up to the due pitch of charity; being θεοδίδακτοι, 'taught of God to love one another;' and endowed with 'the fruits of the spirit,' which are 'love, gentleness, goodness, meekness;' and 'created according to God in Christ Jesus' to the practice of answerable 'good works.'

7. There are divers means conducible to the abatement of difficulty in this practice, which I shall propose, referring the matter to issue on due trial of them.

1. Let us carefully weigh the value of those things which immoderate self-love doth affect in prejudice to charity, together with the worth of those which charity doth set in balance to them.

Aristotle himself doth observe that the ground of culpable self-love, scraping, scrambling, scuffling for particular interest, is men's high esteem and passion for, and greedy appetite of wealth, of honors, of corporeal pleasures: whereas virtuous persons, not admiring those things, will constantly act for honesty sake, and out of love to their friends or country; wherein although they most really benefit and truly gratify themselves, yet are they not blamed for selfishness.

And so indeed it is: if we rightly did apprehend the infinite vanity of all worldly goods, the meanness of private concerns, the true despicableness of all those honors, those profits, those delights on which commonly men do so dote, we should not be so fond or jealous of them, as to scrape or scuffle for them, envying or grudging them to others; if we did conceive the transcendent worth of future rewards allotted to this and other virtues, the great considerableness of public good at which charity aimeth, the many advantages which may accrue to us

from our neighbor's welfare, (entertained with complacence, and wisely accommodated to our use,) we should not be so averse from tendering his good as our own.

2. Let us consider our real state in the world, in dependence on the pleasure and providence of Almighty God.

If we look on ourselves as subsisting only by our own care and endeavor, without any other patronage or help, it may thence prove hard to regard the interests of others as comparable to our own; seeing then, in order to our living with any convenience, it is necessary that we should be solicitous for our own preservation and sustenance, that will engage us to contend with others as competitors for the things we need, and uncapable otherwise to attain: but if (as we ought to do, and the true state of things requireth) we consider ourselves as subsisting under the protection and by the providence of God, who no less careth for us than for others, and no less for others than for us; (for, as the wise man saith, he 'careth for all alike;') who recommendeth to us a being mutually concerned each for other, and is engaged to keep us from suffering thereby; who commandeth us to disburden our cares on himself; who assuredly will the better provide for us, as we do more further the good of others: if we do consider thus, it will deliver us from solicitude concerning our subsistence and personal accommodations, whence we may be free to regard the concerns of others, with no less application than we do regard our own.

As living under the same government and laws (being members of one commonwealth, one corporation, one family) disposeth men not only willingly but earnestly to serve the public interest, beyond any hopes of receiving thence any particular advantage answerable to their pain and care; so considering ourselves as members of the world, and of the church, under the governance and patronage of God, may disengage us from immoderate respect of private good, and incline us to promote the common welfare.

3. There is one plain way of rendering this duty possible, or of perfectly reconciling charity to self-love; which is, a making the welfare of our neighbor to be our own: which if we can do, then easily may we desire it more seriously, then may we promote it with the greatest zeal and vigor: for then it will be

an instance of self-love to exercise charity; then both these inclinations conspiring will march evenly together, one will not extrude nor depress the other.

It may be hard, while our concerns appear divided, not to prefer our own; but when they are coincident, or conspire together, the ground of that partiality is removed.

Nor is this an imaginary course, but grounded in reason, and thereby reducible to practice: for considering the manifold bands of relation (natural, civil, or spiritual) between men, as naturally of the same kind and blood, as civilly members of the same society, as spiritually linked in one brotherhood; considering the mutual advantages derivable from the wealth and welfare of each other, (in way of needful succor, advice, and comfort, of profitable commerce, of pleasant conversation;) considering the mischiefs which from our neighbor's indigency and affliction we may incur, they rendering him as a wild beast, unsociable, troublesome, and formidable to us; considering that we cannot be happy without good nature and good humor, and that good nature cannot behold any sad object without pity and dolorous resentment, good humor cannot subsist in prospect of such objects; considering that charity is an instrument whereby we may apply all our neighbor's good to ourselves, it being ours, if we can find complacence therein; it may appear reasonable to reckon all our neighbor's concerns to our account.

That this is practicable, experience may confirm; for we may observe that men commonly do thus appropriate the concerns of others, resenting the disasters of a friend or of a relation with as sensible displeasure as they could their own; and answerably finding as high a satisfaction in their good fortune. Yea many persons do feel more pain by compassion for others, than they could do in sustaining the same evils; divers can with a stout heart undergo their own afflictions, who are melted with those of a friend or brother. Seeing then in true judgment humanity doth match any other relation, and Christianity far doth exceed all other alliances, why may we not on them ground the like affections and practices, if reason hath any force, or consideration can any wise sway in our practice?

4. It will greatly conduce to the perfect observance of this rule, to the depression of self-love, and advancement of charity

to the highest pitch, if we do studiously contemplate ourselves, strictly examining our conscience, and seriously reflecting on our unworthiness and vileness; the infirmities and defects of nature, the corruptions and defilements of our soul, the sins and miscarriages of our lives: which doing, we shall certainly be far from admiring or doting on ourselves; but rather, as Job did, we shall condemn and abhor ourselves: when we see ourselves so deformed and ugly, how can we be amiable in our own eyes? how can we more esteem or affect ourselves than others, of whose unworthiness we can hardly be so conscious or sure? What place can there be for that vanity and folly, for that pride and arrogance, for that partiality and injustice, which are the sources of immoderate self-love?

5. And, lastly, we may from many conspicuous experiments and examples be assured, that such a practice of this duty is not impossible: but these I have already produced and urged in the precedent discourse, and shall not repeat them again.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXVII.

EPHESIANS, CHAP. V.—VERSE 2.

CHARITY recommended as the main scope of evangelical doctrine: testimony of St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, and St. John to this effect: claimed by our Lord himself for his peculiar law, (John xv. 12. xiii. 34.); and the observance of it is the special badge of his followers. The nature of it will be best understood by a representation of its several chief acts or essential ingredients. Such are those that follow.

I. *Loving our neighbor* implies that we should value and esteem him: this is necessary, because affection follows opinion: the favorable circumstances in man's nature stated: his excellent faculties; his divine extraction; the redemption made for him, and the glory offered him. How then can any man be deemed contemptible, who has so many noble capacities and privileges? This point enlarged on.

II. *Loving our neighbor* implies a sincere and earnest desire for his welfare, and good of all kinds, in due proportion; for it is a property of love, that it would have its object most worthy of itself, and consequently that it should attain to the best state of which it is capable: this point illustrated. Hence we should readily pour out our prayers, which are the truest expressions of good desire, for the welfare of our neighbor. Example of St. Paul and of St. John in this respect; Rom. x. 1. 3 John ii. 3. &c.

III. Charity implies a complacency or delightful satisfaction in the good of our neighbor: this is consequent on the former property; for joy naturally results from events agreeable to

our desire: especially if our neighbor's *spiritual* improvement is concerned; and this is the charity which St. Paul so frequently expresses in his epistles (see 2 Cor. xiii. 9. &c.) This is that which possessed St. John (see 3 John 4.) This also is the charity of heaven, which cheers even the angels, and enhances the bliss of the blessed spirits: Luke xv. 7. 10.

IV. Correspondently, love of our neighbor implies condolence and commiseration of the evils that befal him: for what we love we cannot without displeasure behold lying in a bad condition, sinking into decay, or ready to perish. It is the property of charity, *to mourn with those that mourn*, not coldly, but passionately; for it is, *to weep with those that weep*: this point illustrated by many Scriptural quotations and examples.

V. It is generally a property of love to appropriate its object; in apprehension and affection embracing it, possessing it, enjoying it as its own: so charity doth make our neighbor to be ours, engaging us to consider his case and his concerns as our own: so also charity doth enlarge our minds beyond private considerations, conferring on them an universal interest, and reducing all the world within the verge of our affectionate care; so that a man's self is but a small portion of his regard.

VI. It is a property of love to affect union, or the greatest approximation that can be, to its object. As hatred sets things at a distance, making them to shun or chase away one another, so love attracts, combines, and holds them fast together.

VII. It is a property of love to desire a reciprocal affection; for that is the surest possession and firmest union, which is grounded on voluntarily conspiring affection: and if we value any person, we cannot but prize his good-will and esteem.

VIII. Hence also charity disposes us to please our neighbor, not only by inoffensive, but by obliging demeanor; by a ready complaisance and compliance with his humor and his desire in matters lawful, or consistently with duty and discretion: this point illustrated.

IX. *Love of our neighbor* implies readiness on all occasions to do him good, to promote and advance his benefit in all ways. It does not rest in good opinions of the mind, and good affections of the heart; but from those roots it puts forth abundant fruits of real beneficence: it is a busy, active, industrious disposition of the soul: this point illustrated and enlarged on. This was the charity of the Apostles; and St. Paul declares that he endures all things for the elects' sake.

X. This indeed is a property of charity, to make a man deny himself, to neglect his own interest, yea to despise all selfish regards for the benefit of his neighbor. Liberty is a precious thing; yet how little did St. Paul's charity regard it! how absolutely did he abandon it for his neighbor's good! (1 Cor. ix. 19, &c.) Life is the most precious thing to men; yet even this will charity expose, on urgent occasions, for the good of others: so also with respect to reputation, which to some is still dearer than life itself.

XI. It is a property of love not to stand on distinctions and nice respects; but to be condescending, and willing to perform the meanest offices for the good of a friend: so the greatest souls, and the most glorious beings, are by it disposed with greatest readiness to serve their inferiors. Example of St. Paul (1 Cor. ix. 19.); of the blessed *ministering* angels; of the Son of God himself. Thus love is the great leveller, which brings down heaven to earth, and raises earth to heaven.

XII. Charity regulates our dealing, our deportment, our conversation toward our neighbor, implying good usage and fair treatment of him on all occasions: wherefore the language of charity is soft and sweet, not wounding the heart, nor grating on the ear of any with whom a man converses; it is like the language of the wise man, Prov. xvi. 24. Its carriage is gentle and courteous; its dealing equal and fair, not fostering any bad humor to embitter society: this subject enlarged on. Such are the properties of charity. But there are also many particular acts which have a very close alliance with it, and are

recommended to us by precepts in the holy Scriptures. These it will be convenient to mention.

1. It is a proper act of charity to forbear anger on provocation, or to repress its motions; to resent injuries either not at all, or very calmly and mildly: for charity *is not easily provoked*, &c.

2. It is a proper act of charity to remit offences, suppressing all desire of revenge, and not retaining any grudge; for charity *doth cover all things*, and in this sense doth *hide a multitude of sins*.

3. It is a duty coherent with charity, to maintain concord and peace, to abstain from contention and strife, together with the sources of them, pride, envy, and malice. We are commanded to be *of one soul and of one mind*, &c.

4. Another charitable practice is, the being candid in opinion, and mild in censure about our neighbor and his actions, giving the most favorable construction to his words, and the fairest interpretation to his designs: this point enlarged on.

5. Another such practice is, to bear with the infirmities of our neighbor, according to that rule of St. Paul, *we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak*; and that precept of Christ, *bear one another's burdens*, &c.

6. It is an act of charity to abstain from offending or scandalising our brethren, by doing any thing which may either occasion him to commit sin, disaffect him to religion, discourage him in the practice of duty, or anywise discompose, vex, and grieve him: for *if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably*.

SERMON XXVII.

THE NATURE, PROPERTIES, AND ACTS OF CHARITY.

EPHESIANS, CHAP. V.—VERSE 2.

And walk in love.

ST. PAUL telleth us that 'the end of the commandment' (or the main scope of the evangelical doctrine) is charity, 'out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;' that charity is a general principle of all good practice; ('let all your things be done in charity;') that it is the sum and abridgment of all other duties, so that 'he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the whole law:' that it is the chief of the theological virtues; the 'prime fruit of the divine Spirit,' and 'the band of perfection,' which combineth and consummateth all other graces.

St. Peter enjoineth us that to all other virtues we should add charity, as the top and crown of them; and, 'Above all things,' saith he, 'have fervent charity among yourselves.'

St. James styleth the law of charity *νόμον βασιλικὸν*, the royal, or sovereign law.

St. John calleth it, in way of excellence, 'the commandment of God;' 'this is his commandment, that we should love one another.'

Our Lord claimeth it for his peculiar law; 'This is my commandment;' 'and a new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.' And he maketh the observance of

it the special badge and cognisance of his followers; 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.'

It being therefore a duty of so grand importance, it is most requisite that we should well understand it, and faithfully observe it; to which purposes I shall, by God's assistance, endeavor to confer somewhat, first by explaining its nature, then by pressing the observance of it by several inducements.

The nature of it will, as I conceive, be best understood by representing the several chief acts, which it compriseth or implieth as necessary prerequisites, or essential ingredients, or inseparable adherents to it; some internally resident in the soul, others discharged in external performance; together with some special properties of it. And such are those which follow.

I. 'Loving our neighbor' doth imply that we should value and esteem him: this is necessary, for affection doth follow opinion; so that we cannot like any thing which we do not esteem, or wherein we do not apprehend some considerable good, attractive of affection; that is not amiable, which is wholly contemptible; or so far as it is such.

But in right judgment no man is such; for the wise man telleth us that 'he that despiseth his neighbor, sinneth;' and, 'He is void of understanding that despiseth his neighbor:' but no man is guilty of sin or folly for despising that which is wholly despicable.

It is indeed true that every man is subject to defects, and to mischances, apt to breed contempt, especially in the minds of vulgar and weak people; but no man is really despicable. For,

Every man living hath stamped on him the venerable image of his glorious Maker, which nothing incident to him can utterly deface.

Every man is of a divine extraction, and allied to heaven by nature and by grace; as the son of God, and brother of God incarnate. 'If I did despise the cause of my man-servant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what

shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?'

Every man is endued with that celestial faculty of reason, 'inspired by the Almighty,' (for, 'There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding,') and hath an immortal spirit residing in him; or rather is himself an angelical spirit dwelling in a visible tabernacle.

Every man was originally designed and framed for a fruition of eternal happiness.

Every man hath an interest in the common redemption, purchased by the blood of the Son of God, who 'tasted death for every one.'

Every man is capable of sovereign bliss, and hath a crown of endless glory offered to him.

In fine, every man, and all men alike, antecedently to their own will and choice, are the objects of his love, of his care, of his mercy; who is 'loving unto every man, and whose mercy is over all his works;' who 'hath made the small and the great, and careth for all alike;' who 'is rich,' in bounty and mercy, 'toward all that call on him.'

How then can any man be deemed contemptible, having so noble relations, capacities, and privileges? How a man standeth in esteem with God Elihu telleth us; 'God,' saith he, 'is mighty, and despiseth not any:' although he be so mighty, so excellent in perfection, so infinitely in state exalted above all, yet doth not he slight any; and how can we contemn those, whom the certain voucher and infallible judge of worth deigneth to value? Indeed God so valued every man as to take great care, to be at great cost and trouble, to stoop down from heaven, to assume mortal flesh, to endure pinching wants and sore distresses, to 'taste death for every one.'

We may ask with St. Paul, 'Why dost thou set at nought thy brother?'

Is it for the lowness of his condition, or for any misfortune that hath befallen him? But are not the best men, are not all men, art not thou thyself obnoxious to the like? Hath not God declared that he hath a special regard to such? And are

not such things commonly disposed by his hand with a gracious intent?

Is it for meanness of parts, or abilities, or endowments? But are not these the gifts of God, absolutely at his disposal, and arbitrarily distributed or preserved; so that thou who art so wise in thy own conceit to-day, mayest, by a disease, or from a judgment, deserved by thy pride, become an idiot to-morrow? Have not many good, and therefore many happy men, wanted those things?

Is it for moral imperfections or blemishes; for vicious habits, or actual misdemeanors? These indeed are the only debasements and disparagements of a man; yet do they not expunge the characters of Divinity impressed on his nature; and he may by God's mercy recover from them. And are not we ourselves, if grace do not uphold us, liable to the same? Yea, may we not, if without partiality or flattery we examine ourselves, discern the same within us, or other defects equivalent? And, however, is not pity rather due to them than contempt? Whose character was it, that 'they trusted they were righteous, and despised others?' That the most palpable offender should not be quite despised, God had a special care in his law, for that end moderating punishment, and restraining the number of stripes; 'If,' saith the law, 'the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.'

We may consider that the common things, both good and bad, wherein men agree, are far more considerable than the peculiar things wherein they differ; to be a man is much beyond being a lord, or a wit, or a philosopher; to be a Christian doth infinitely surpass being an emperor, or a learned clerk; to be a sinner is much worse than to be a beggar, or an idiot. The agreement of men is in the substance and body of things; the difference is in a circumstance, a fringe, or a shadow about them; so that we cannot despise another man, without reflecting contempt on ourselves, who are so very like him, and not

considerably better than he, or hardly can without arrogance pretend to be so.

We may therefore, and reason doth require that we should value our neighbor; and it is no impossible or unreasonable precept which St. Peter giveth us, to 'honor all men;' and with it a charitable mind will easily comply: it ever will descry something valuable, something honorable, something amiable in our neighbor; it will find somewhat of dignity in the meanest, somewhat of worth in the basest, somewhat hopeful in the most degenerate of men; it therefore will not absolutely slight or scorn any man whatever, looking on him as an abject or forlorn wretch, unworthy of consideration.

It is indeed a point of charity to see more things estimable in others than in ourselves; or to be apprehensive of more defects meriting disesteem in ourselves than in others; and consequently in our opinion to prefer others before us, according to those apostolical precepts, 'Be kindly affected one toward another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.' 'In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.' 'Be subject one to another.'

II. Loving our neighbor doth imply a sincere and earnest desire of his welfare, and good of all kinds, in due proportion: for it is a property of love, that it would have its object most worthy of itself, and consequently that it should attain the best state whereof it is capable, and persist firm therein; to be fair and plump, to florish and thrive without diminution or decay; this is plain to experience in respect to any other thing (a horse, a flower, a building, or any such thing) which we pretend to love: wherefore charity should dispose us to be thus affected to our neighbor; so that we do not look on his condition or affairs with an indifferent eye or cold heart, but are much concerned for him, and put forth hearty wishes for his interests: we should wish him adorned with all virtue, and accomplished with all worthy endowments of soul; we should wish him prosperous success in all his designs, and a comfortable satisfaction of his desires; we should wish him with alacrity of mind to reap the fruits of his industry, and to enjoy the best accommodations of his life. Not formally and

in compliment, as the mode is, but really and with a cordial sense, on his undertaking any enterprise, we should wish him good speed; on any prosperous success of his endeavors, we should bid him joy; wherever he is going, whatever he is doing, we should wish him peace and the presence of God with him: we should tender his health, his safety, his quiet, his reputation, his wealth, his prosperity in all respects; but especially with peculiar ardency we should desire his final welfare, and the happiness of his soul, that being incomparably his chief concern.

Hence readily should we pour forth our prayers, which are the truest expressions of good desire, for the welfare of our neighbor, to him who is able to work and bestow it.

Such was the charity of St. Paul for his countrymen, signified in those words, 'brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved;' such was his love to the Philippians, 'God is my record, how greatly I long after you all, in the bowels of Jesus Christ:' 'and this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowlege, and in all judgment.'

Such was St. John's charity to his friend Gaius, to whom he said, 'Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayst prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.'

Such is the charity, which we are enjoined to express toward all men, by 'praying for all men,' in conformity to the charity of God, who 'will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowlege of the truth.'

Such is the charity we are commanded to use toward our enemies, 'blessing those who curse us, and praying for those who despitefully use us and persecute us; the which was exemplified by our Lord, by St. Stephen, by all the holy Apostles.

III. Charity doth imply a complacence or delightful satisfaction in the good of our neighbor; this is consequent on the former property, for that joy naturally doth result from events agreeable to our desire: charity hath a good eye, which is not offended or dazzled with the lustre of its neighbor's virtue, or with the splendor of his fortune, but vieweth either of them steadily with pleasure, as a very delightful

spectacle; it beholdeth him to prosper and florish, to grow in wealth and repute, not only without envious repining, but with gladsome content: its property is 'to rejoice with them that rejoice;' to partake of their enjoyments, to feast in their pleasures, to triumph in their success.

As one member doth feel the health and the delight which another immediately doth enjoy; so hath a charitable man a sensible complacence in the welfare and joy of his neighbor.

His prosperity of any kind, in proportion to its importance, doth please him; but especially his spiritual proficiency and improvement in virtue doth yield matter of content; and his good deeds he beholdeth with abundant satisfaction.

This is that instance of charity which St. Paul so frequently doth express in his epistles, declaring the extreme joy he did feel in the faith, in the virtue, in the orderly conversation of those brethren to whom he writeth.

This charity possessed St. John, when he said, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.'

This is the charity of heaven, which doth even cheer the angels, and doth enhance the bliss of the blessed spirits there; of whom it is said, 'there is joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth.' Hence this is the disposition of charitable persons, sincerely to congratulate any good occurrence to their neighbor; they are ready to conspire in rendering thanks and praise to the Author of their welfare, taking the good conferred on their neighbor as a blessing and obligation on themselves; so that they on such occasions are apt to say with St. Paul, 'what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before God?' and, 'We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and that the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth:' and, 'I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him.'

It is a precept of St. Paul, 'give thanks always ὑπὲρ πάντων;' which is translated 'for all things,' but it might as well be rendered 'for all persons,' according to that injunction, 'I

exhort that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men:' not only prayers are to be made, but thanksgivings are to be offered for all men, out of general charity.

IV. Correspondently, love of our neighbor doth imply condolency and commiseration of the evils befalling him: for what we love, we cannot without displeasure behold lying in a bad condition, sinking into decay, or in danger to perish; so, to a charitable mind, the bad state of any man is a most unpleasant and painful sight.

It is the property of charity 'to mourn with those that mourn;' not coldly, but passionately, (for it is 'to weep with those that weep,') resenting every man's case with an affection suitable thereto, and as he doth himself resent it.

Is any man fallen into disgrace? charity doth hold down its head, is abashed and out of countenance, partaking of his shame: is any man disappointed of his hopes or endeavors? charity crieth out alas, as if it were itself defeated: is any man afflicted with pain or sickness? charity looketh sadly, it sigheth and groaneth, it fainteth and languisheth with him: is any man pinched with hard want? charity if it cannot succor, it will condole: doth ill news arrive? charity doth hear it with an unwilling ear and a sad heart, although not particularly concerned in it. The sight of a wreck at sea, of a field spread with carcases, of a country desolated, of houses burnt and cities ruined, and of the like calamities incident to mankind, would touch the bowels of any man; but the very report of them would affect the heart of charity. It doth not suffer a man with comfort or ease to enjoy the accommodations of his own state, while others before him are in distress: it cannot be merry while any man in presence is sorrowful: it cannot seem happy while its neighbor doth appear miserable: it hath a share in all the afflictions which it doth behold or hear of, according to that instance in St. Paul of the Philippians, 'ye have done well, that ye did communicate with (or partake in) my afflictions;' and according to that precept, 'Remember those which are in bonds, as bound with them.'

Such was the charity of Job; 'Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?'

Such was the charity of the psalmist, even toward his ingrateful enemies; 'They,' saith he, 'rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.' But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting. I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or my brother; I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother.'

Such was the charity of St. Paul; 'Who is weak,' said he, 'and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?' with fervent compassion.

Such was the charity of our Saviour; which so reigned in his heart, that no passion is so often attributed to him as this of pity, it being expressed to be the motive of his great works. 'Jesus,' saith St. Matthew, 'went forth, and saw a great multitude,' *καὶ ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοῖς*, 'and was moved (in his bowels) with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick:' and, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way:' and, 'Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes:' and, 'Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him, (the leper,) and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean:' and, 'When the Lord saw her, (the widow of Nain, whose son was carried out,) he had compassion on her:' and, 'He beheld the city, and wept over it,' considering the miseries impendent on it, as a just punishment of their outrageous injuries against himself; and when the two good sisters did bewail their brother Lazarus, 'He groaned in spirit, and was troubled;' and wept with them; whence the Jews did collect, 'Behold how he loved him!'

Thus any calamity or misfortune befalling his neighbor doth raise distasteful regret and commiseration in a charitable soul; but especially moral evils (which indeed are the great evils, in comparison whereto nothing else is evil) do work that effect: to see men dishonor and wrong their Maker, to provoke his anger, and incur his disfavor; to see men abuse their reason, and disgrace their nature; to see men endamage their spiritual estate, to endanger the loss of their souls, to discost from their happiness, and run into eternal ruin, by distemper of mind and an inordinate conversation; this is most afflictive to a man endued

with any good degree of charity. Could one see a man sprawling on the ground, weltering in his blood, with gaping wounds, gasping for breath, without compassion? And seeing the condition of him that lieth grovelling in sin, weltering in guilt, wounded with bitter remorse and pangs of conscience, nearly obnoxious to eternal death, is far worse and more deplorable; how can it but touch the heart of a charitable man, and stir his bowels with compassionate anguish?

Such was the excellent charity of the holy psalmist, signified in those ejaculations, 'I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word:' and, 'Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law.'

Such was the charity of St. Paul toward his incredulous and obdurate countrymen, (notwithstanding their hatred and ill-treatment of himself,) the which he so earnestly did aver in those words, 'I say the truth, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart' for them.

Such was the charity of our Lord, which disposed him as to a continual sense of men's evils, so on particular occasions to grieve at their sins and spiritual wants; as when the pharisees maligned him for his doing good, he, it is said, did συλλυπεῖσθαι, 'grieve (or condole) for the hardness of their heart;' and, 'When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd:' and when 'he wept over Jerusalem,' because it did not 'know in its day the things which belonged to its peace,' (either temporal or eternal.)

This is that charity, which God himself in a wonderful and incomprehensible manner doth exemplify to us: for he is 'the Father of pities;' πολύσπλαγχνος, 'full of bowels;' his 'bowels are troubled,' and 'do sound,' when he is (for upholding justice, or reclaiming sinners) constrained to inflict punishment; of him it is said, that 'his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel;' and that he was 'afflicted in all the afflictions' of his people. So incredible miracles doth infinite charity work in God, that the impassible God in a manner should suffer with us, that happiness itself should partake in our misery; that grief should spring up in the fountain of joy. How this can

be, we thoroughly cannot well apprehend; but surely those expresses are used in condescension to signify the greatly charitable benignity of God, and to show us our duty, that 'we should be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful,' sympathising with the miseries and sorrows of our brethren.

This is that duty which is so frequently inculcated; when we are charged to 'put on bowels of pity,' to be εὔσπλαγχνοι, 'tender-hearted,' to be συμπαθεῖς, 'compassionate' one toward another.

Hence it is that good men in this world cannot live in any briskness of mirth or height of jollity, their own enjoyments being tempered by the discontents of others; the continual obvious spectacles of sorrow and of sin damping their pleasures, and quashing excessive transports of joy: for who could much enjoy himself in an hospital, in a prison, in a charnel?

V. It is generally a property of love to appropriate its object; in apprehension and affection embracing it, possessing it, enjoying it as its own: so charity doth make our neighbor to be ours, engaging us to tender his case, and his concerns as our own; so that we shall exercise about them the same affections of soul, (the same desires, the same hopes and fears, the same joys and sorrows,) as about our own nearest and most peculiar interest; so that his danger will affright us, and in his security we shall find repose; his profit is gain, and his losses are damages to us; we do rise by his preferment, and sink down by his fall; his good speed is a satisfaction, and his disappointment a cross to us; his enjoyments afford pleasure, and his sufferings bring pain to us.

So charity doth enlarge our minds beyond private considerations, conferring on them an universal interest, and reducing all the world within the verge of their affectionate care; so that a man's self is a very small and inconsiderable portion of his regard: whence charity is said not to 'seek its own things,' and we are commanded not to 'look on our own things;' for that the regard which charity beareth to its own interest, in comparison to that which it beareth toward the concerns of others, hath the same proportion as one man hath to all men; being therefore exceedingly small, and as it were none at all.

This, saith St. Chrysostom, 'is the canon of most perfect Chris-

tianism, this is an exact boundary, this is the highest top of it, to seek things profitable to the public:' and according to this rule charity doth walk, it prescribeth that compass to itself, it aspireth to that pitch; it disposeth to act as St. Paul did, 'I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.'

VI. It is a property of love to affect union, or the greatest approximation that can be to its object. As hatred doth set things at distance, making them to shun or chase away one another; so love doth attract things, doth combine them, doth hold them fast together; every one would be embracing and enjoying what he loveth in the manner whereof it is capable: so doth charity dispose a man to conjunction with others; it soon will breed acquaintance, kind conversation, and amicable correspondence with our neighbor.

It would be a stranger to no man, to whom by its intercourse it may yield any benefit or comfort.

Its arms are always open, and its bosom free to receive all, who do not reject or decline its amity.

It is most frankly accessible, most affable, most tractable, most sociable, most apt to interchange good offices; most ready to oblige others, and willing to be obliged by them.

It avoideth that unreasonable suspiciousness and diffidence, that timorous shyness, that crafty reservedness, that supercilious morosity, that fastidious sullenness, and the like untoward dispositions, which keep men in estrangement, stifling good inclinations to familiarity and friendship.

VII. It is a property of love to desire a reciprocal affection; for that is the surest possession and firmest union, which is grounded on voluntarily conspiring in affection; and if we do value any person, we cannot but prize his good-will and esteem.

Charity is the mother of friendship, not only as inclining us to love others, but as attracting others to love us; disposing us to affect their amity, and by obliging means to procure it.

Hence is that evangelical precept so often enjoined to us, of 'pursuing peace with all men,' importing that we should desire and seek by all fair means the good-will of men, without

which peace from them cannot subsist; for if they do not love us, they will be infesting us with unkind words or deeds.

VIII. Hence also charity disposeth to please our neighbor, not only by inoffensive but by obliging demeanor; by a ready complaisance and compliance with his fashion, with his humor, with his desire in matters lawful, or in a way consistent with duty and discretion.

Such charity St. Paul did prescribe: 'Let every one please his neighbor, for his good to edification:' such he practised himself, 'Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit;' and, 'I have made myself a servant to all, that I might gain the more.'

Such was the charity of our Lord, for 'even Christ pleased not himself:' he indeed did stoop to converse with sorry men in their way, he came when he was invited, he accepted their entertainment, he from the frankness of his conversation with all sorts of persons did undergo the reproach of being 'a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.'

It is the genius and complexion of charity to affect nothing uncouth or singular in matters of indifferent nature; to be candid, not rigid in opinion; to be pliable, not stiff in humor; to be smooth and gentle, not rugged and peevish in behavior.

It doth indeed not flatter, not sooth, not humor any man in bad things, or in things very absurd and foolish; it would rather choose to displease and cross him, than to abuse, to delude, to wrong, or hurt him; but excepting such cases, it gladly pleaseth all men, denying its own will and conceit to satisfy the pleasure and fancy of others: practising that which St. Peter enjoined in that precept, 'Be of one mind, be compassionate, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous;'* or as St. Paul might intend, when he bid us, χαρίζεσθαι ἀλλήλοις, 'to gratify, to indulge one another.'

IX. Love of our neighbor doth imply readiness on all occasions to do him good, to promote and advance his benefit in all kinds.

* Ὁμόφρονες, συμπαθεῖς, φιλάδελφοι, εὔσπλαγχνοι, φιλόφρονες.—1 Pet. iii. 8.

It doth not rest in good opinions of mind, and good affections of heart, but from those roots doth put forth abundant fruits of real beneficence; it will not be satisfied with faint desires or sluggish wishes, but will be up and doing what it can for its neighbor.

Love is a busy and active, a vigorous and sprightful, a courageous and industrious disposition of soul; which will prompt a man, and push him forward to undertake or undergo any thing, to endure pains, to encounter dangers, to surmount difficulties for the good of its object.

Such is true charity; it will dispose us 'to love,' as St. John prescribeth, ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, 'in work and in truth:' not only in mental desire, but in effectual performance; not only in verbal pretence, but in real effect.

Hence charity will render a man a general benefactor, in all matters, on all occasions; affording to his neighbor all kinds of assistance and relief, according to his neighbor's need, and his own ability: it will make him a bountiful dispenser of his goods to the poor, a comforter of the afflicted, a visiter of the sick, an instructor of the ignorant, an adviser of the doubtful, a protector of the oppressed, a hospitable entertainer of strangers, a reconciler of differences, an intercessor for offenders, an advocate of those who need defence, a succorer of all that want help.

The practice of Job describeth its nature; 'I,' saith he, 'delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came on me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame: I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out: and I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.' 'If I have held the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering.—The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller.'

Such is a charitable man; the sun is not more liberal of his light and warmth, than he is of beneficial influence.

He doth not spare his substance, being 'rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate:' and where his estate faileth, yet the contribution of his endeavor will not be wanting; he will be ready to draw and press others to beneficence; so doing good not only according to his power, but in a manner beyond it, making the ability of others to supply his own weakness, and being liberal with their wealth. The description of Cimon is a good character of a charitable man, *Nulli fides ejus, nulli opera, nulli res familiaris defuit.*

Thus may the poorest men be great benefactors: so the poor Apostles, who had nothing, yet did enrich many; not only in spiritual treasure, but taking care for supply of the poor, by their precepts and moving exhortations: and he that 'had not where to lay his head,' was the most bountiful person that ever was; 'for our sake he became poor, that we by his poverty might be made rich.'

In all kinds charity disposeth to further our neighbor's good, but especially in the concerns of his soul; the which as incomparably they do surpass all others, so it is the truest and noblest charity to promote them.

It will incline us 'to draw forth our soul to the hungry, and to satisfy the afflicted soul;' 'to bring the poor that are cast out to our house; to cover the naked, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke:' to supply any corporal indigency, to relieve any temporal distress: but especially it will induce to make provision for the soul, to relieve the spiritual needs of our neighbor; by affording him good instruction, and taking care that he be informed in his duty, or conducted in his way to happiness: by admonition and exhortation quickening, encouraging, provoking, spurring him 'to good works:' by resolving him in his doubts, and comforting him in his troubles of conscience; ('lifting up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees;') by seasonable and prudent reproof: by all ways 'serving' to convert him from the error of his way;' and so 'saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins;' which is the proper work of charity: for 'charity,' saith St. Peter, 'covereth a multitude of sins.'

This was the charity of our Saviour: 'He went about doing

good,' healing the bodily infirmities, ('every sickness and every disease among the people,') satisfying their bodily necessities, comforting them in their worldly distresses, so far as to perform great miracles for those purposes; (curing inveterate maladies, restoring limbs and senses, raising the dead, multiplying loaves and fishes:) but his charity was chiefly exercised in spiritual beneficence; in purveying sustenance and comfort for their souls, in feeding their minds by wholesome instruction, in curing their spiritual distempers, in correcting their ignorances and errors, in exciting them to duty by powerful advices and exhortations, in supporting them by heavenly consolations against temptations and troubles.

Thus also did the charity of the holy Apostles principally exert itself: they did not neglect affording relief to the outward needs of men; they did take care by earnest intercession and exhortation for support of the poor; but especially they did labor to promote the spiritual benefit of men: for this they did undertake so many cares, and toils, and travels: for this they did undergo so many hardships, so many hazards, so many difficulties and troubles: 'Therefore,' said St. Paul, 'I endure all things for the elects' sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.'

X. This indeed is a property of charity, to make a man deny himself, to neglect his own interest, yea to despise all selfish regards for the benefit of his neighbor: to him that is inspired with charity, his own good is not good, when it standeth in competition with the more considerable good of another; nothing is so dear to him, which he gladly will not part with on such considerations.

Liberty is a precious thing, which every man gladly would enjoy: yet how little did St. Paul's charity regard it? how absolutely did he abandon it for his neighbor's good? 'Though,' said he, 'I am free from all men, yet I have made myself servant (or have enslaved myself) unto all, that I might gain the more:' and he did express much satisfaction in the bonds which he bare for the good of his brethren. 'I Paul,' saith he, 'the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles;' 'I suffer trouble as an evil-doer, even unto bonds;' 'endure all things for the elects' sake.'

Every man loveth his own humor, and would please himself: but the charity of St. Paul did rather choose 'to please all men; making him all things to all men, that by all means he might save some:' and the rule he commended to others, and imposed on himself, was this, 'We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.'

Profit is the common mark of men's designs and endeavors: but charity often doth not aim thereat, but waveth it for its neighbor's advantage: for μὴ σκοπεῖτε, 'Aim not every man at his own things, but every man also at the things of others,' is St. Paul's rule; and, 'Not to seek his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved,' was his practice.

To suffer is grievous to human nature, and every man would shun it; but charity not only doth support it, but joyeth in it, when it conduceth to its neighbor's advantage: 'I rejoice,' said that charitable Apostle, 'in my sufferings for you.'

Ease is a thing generally desirable and acceptable; but charity doth part with it, embracing labor, watchings, travels, and troubles for its neighbor's good: on this account did the holy Apostles undertake 'abundant labors,' as St. Paul telleth us; and 'to this end,' saith he, 'do I labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily:' to what end? 'that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:' this is that κόπος ἀγάπης, that 'labour of love,' which they did commend in others, and so notably themselves exercise.

Life of all things is held most precious and dear; yet this charity on urgent occasions will expose, will sacrifice for its neighbor's good: 'This,' our Lord telleth us, 'is the greatest love that any man can express to his friend;' and the highest instance that ever was of charity was herein showed; the imitation whereof St. John doth not doubt to recommend to us: 'In this,' saith he, 'have we known the love of God, because he hath laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our life for the brethren:' and St. Paul, 'Walk in love, even as Christ loved us, and gave himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God:' the which precept he backed with his own example; 'I,' saith he, 'very gladly will spend and be spent for your souls;' and 'If I be offered on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all:' and 'Being

affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.'

Reputation to some is more dear than life, and it is worse than death to be held a malefactor, to be loaded with odious reproaches, to have an infamous character; yet charity will engage men hereto, willingly to sustain the most grievous obloquy and disgrace: for this the same heroical Apostles did pass through 'honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true:'—for this they 'were made a spectacle to the world, as fools, as weak, as despicable;'—were 'reviled, defamed, made as the filth of the world, and offscouring of all things.' For this St. Paul was content to suffer, ὡς κακοῦργος, 'as a malefactor.' So there was nothing which charity will not deny itself and lose for the good of its neighbor.

XI. It is a property of love not to stand on distinctions and nice respects; but to be condescensive, and willing to perform the meanest offices, needful or useful for the good of its friend.

He that truly loveth is a voluntary servant, and gladly will stoop to any employment, for which the need or considerable benefit of him whom he loveth doth call.

So the greatest souls, and the most glorious beings, the which are most endued with charity, by it are disposed with greatest readiness to serve their inferiors.

This made St. Paul constitute himself 'a servant' (we might render it a slave) 'of all men,' absolutely devoted to the promoting their interests with his utmost labor and diligence; undertaking toilsome drudgeries, running about on errands for them.

This maketh the blessed and glorious angels (the principalities and powers above) vouchsafe to wait on men, to be the guards of all good men, to be ministering spirits, 'sent out to minister for them who shall inherit salvation:' not only obedience to God enforceth them, but charity disposeth them gladly to serve us, who are so much their inferiors; the same charity, which produceth joy in them at the conversion of a sinner.

This made the Son of God to descend from heaven, and lay aside that 'glory which he had with God before the world

was;' this made him who was so 'rich to become poor, that we by his poverty might be enriched;' this made him converse and demean himself among his servants, 'as he that ministered;' this made him to wash his disciples' feet, thereby designing instructively to exemplify the duty and nature of charity; for 'If,' said he, 'I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, then ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.'

This maketh God himself ('the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity') to condescend so far, as to be continually employed in carefully watching over, in providing for, in protecting and assisting us vile and wretched worms; for though 'he dwelleth on high, yet humbleth he himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth.' This maketh him with so much pain and patience to support our infirmities, to bear with our offences, to wait for our conversion; according to that protestation in the prophet, 'Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.'

In conformity to this wonderful practice, whose actions are the best rules and patterns of our deportment, charity should dispose us, according to St. Paul's practice, 'by love to serve one another.'

Indeed it will not suffer any man to look down on another with supercilious contempt or neglect, as if he were unworthy or beneath our regard. It will incline superiors to look on their inferiors, (their subjects, their servants, their meanest and poorest neighbors,) not as beasts or as slaves, but as men, as brethren; as descending from the same stock, as partakers of the common nature and reason; as those 'who have obtained the like precious faith;' as heirs of the same precious promises and glorious hopes; as their equals in the best things, and in all considerable advantages; equals in God's sight, and according to our Lord's intent, when he said, 'One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren;' according to St. Paul's exhortation to Philemon, that he would receive Onesimus, 'not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved in the Lord.'

Accordingly charity will dispose men of rank in their behavior

to be condescensive, lowly, meek, courteous, obliging and helpful to those, who in human eye or in worldly state are most below them; remembering that ordinance of our Lord, charged on all his disciples, and enforced by his own pattern, 'He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant.'

Love indeed is the great leveller, which in a manner setteth all things on even ground, and reduceth to a just poise; which bringeth down heaven to earth, and raiseth up earth to heaven; which inclineth the highest to wait on the lowest; which engageth the strength of the mightiest to help the weakest, and the wealth of the richest to supply the poorest, ὅπως γένηται ἰσότης, that 'there may be an equality;' that no where there may be an useless abundance, or a helpless indigence.

XII. Charity doth regulate our dealing, our deportment, our conversation toward our neighbor, implying good usage and fair treatment of him on all occasions; for no man doth handle that which he loveth rudely or roughly, so as to endanger the loss, the detriment, the hurt or offence thereof.

Wherefore the language of charity is soft and sweet, not wounding the heart, nor grating on the ear of any with whom a man converseth; like the language of which the wise man saith, 'The words of the pure are pleasant words:'—such as are 'sweet to the soul, and health to the bones;' and, 'The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious;' such as our Lord's were, λόγοι χάριτος, 'words of grace;' such as the Apostle speaketh of, 'Let your speech be always ἐν χάριτι, with grace,'— such as may 'give grace to the hearers:' being entertained, not with aversation, but with favorable acceptance.

Its carriage is gentle, courteous, benign; bearing in it marks of affection and kind respect.

Its dealing is equal, moderate, fair, yielding no occasion of disgust or complaint; not catching at, or taking advantages, not meting hard measure.

It doth not foster any bad passion or humor, which may embitter or sour conversation, so that it rendereth a man continually good company.

If a man be harsh or surly in his discourse, rugged or rude in his demeanor, hard and rigorous in his dealing, it is a certain argument of his defect in charity: for that calmeth and sweeten-

eth the mind; it quasheth keen, fierce, and boisterous passions; it discardeth those conceits, and those humors, from whence such practice doth issue.

'Charity,' saith St. Paul, οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ, 'behaveth not itself unhandsomely;' is not untoward, unseemly, uncivil, or clownish in word, or in carriage, or in deed: it is in truth the most civilising and most polishing disposition that can be; nothing doth render a man so completely genteel; not in an affected or artificial way, (consisting in certain postures or motions of body; (dopping, cringing, &c.) in forms of expression, or modish addresses, which men learn like parrots, and vent by rote, usually not meaning any thing by them, often with them disguising fraud and rancor,) but in a real and natural manner, suggested by good judgment and hearty affection.

A charitable man may perhaps not be guilty of courtship, or may be unpractised in the modes of address; but he will not be deficient in the substance of paying every man proper and due respect; this indeed is true courtesy, grounded on reason, and proceeding from the heart; which therefore is far more genuine, more solid, more steady, than that which is built on fashion and issueth from affectation; the which indeed only doth ape or counterfeit the deportment of charity: for what a charitable man truly is, that a gallant would seem to be.

Such are the properties of charity.

There be also farther many particular acts, which have a very close alliance to it, (being ever coherent with it, or springing from it,) which are recommended to us by precepts in the holy Scripture; the which it will be convenient to mention.

1. It is a proper act of charity to forbear anger on provocation, or to repress its motions; to resent injuries and discourtesies either not at all, or very calmly and mildly: for

Charity οὐ παροξύνεται, 'is not easily provoked.'

Charity μακροθυμεῖ, 'suffereth long and is kind.'

Charity πάντα ὑπομένει, 'doth endure all things.'

Anger is a violent insurrection of the mind against a person, but love is not apt to rise up in opposition against any; anger is an intemperate heat, love hath a pure warmth quite of another nature; as natural heat is from a fever; or as the heat of the sun from that of a culinary fire, which putteth that out, as

the sun-beams do extinguish a culinary fire: anger hath an ὄρεξις ἀμύνης, 'an appetite of revenge,' or doing mischief to the object of it; but love is innocent 'and worketh no evil.'

Love disposeth, if our neighbor doth misbehave himself toward us, (by wrongful usage, or unkind carriage,) to be sorry for him, and to pity him; which are passions contrary to anger, and slaking the violences of it.

It is said in the Canticles, 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it:' charity would hold out against many neglects, many provocations.

Hence the precepts; 'Walk with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice:' 'Put off anger, wrath, malice,' &c. 'Be slow to wrath.'

2. It is a proper act of charity to remit offences, suppressing all designs of revenge, and not retaining any grudge: for,

Charity πάντα στέγει, 'doth cover all things;' and in this sense doth 'hide a multitude of sins:' all dispositions, all intents to do harm are inconsistent with it, are quite repugnant to it.

Hence those precepts; 'Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye:' 'Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another; even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you:' 'See that none render evil for evil, but ever follow that which is good both among yourselves and to all men:' and many the like precepts occur in the Gospels, the apostolical writings; yea even in the Old Testament, wherein charity did not run in so high a strain.

3. It is a duty coherent with charity, to maintain concord and peace; to abstain from contention and strife, together with the sources of them, pride, envy, emulation, malice.

We are commanded to be σύμψυχοι, and ὁμόφρονες, 'of one soul, of one mind,' (like 'the multitude of believers' in the Acts, who 'had one heart and one soul;') that we should 'keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;' that we

should be 'of one accord, of one mind, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind;' that we should 'all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment;' that there be no factions, or 'schisms in the body;' that all dissensions, all clamors, all murmurings, all emulations should be abandoned and put away from us; that we should "pursue and maintain peace with all men:' obedience to which commands can only be the result of charity, esteeming the person and judgment of our neighbor; desiring his good will, tendering his good; curbing those fleshly lusts, and those fierce passions from the predominancy whereof discords and strifes do spring.

4. Another charitable practice is, being candid in opinion, and mild in censure, about our neighbor and his actions: having a good conceit of his person, and representing him to ourselves under the best character we can; making the most favorable construction of his words, and the fairest interpretation of his designs.

Charity disposeth us to entertain a good opinion of our neighbor: for desiring his good we shall be concerned for him, and prejudiced, as it were, on his side; being unwilling to discover any blemish in him to our own disappointment and regret.

Love cannot subsist without esteem; and it would not willingly by destroying that lose its own subsistence.

Love would preserve any good of its friend, and therefore his reputation; which is a good in itself precious, and ever very dear to him.

Love would bestow any good, and therefore its esteem; which is a considerable good.

Harsh censure is a very rude kind of treatment, grievously vexing a man, and really hurting him; charity therefore will not be guilty of it.

It disposeth rather to oversee and connive at faults than to find them, or to pore on them; rather to hide and smother, than to disclose or divulge them; rather to extenuate and excuse, than to exaggerate or aggravate them.

Are words capable of a good sense? charity will expound them thereto: may an action be imputed to any good intent?

charity will ever refer it thither: doth a fault admit any plea, apology, or diminution? charity will be sure to allege it: may a quality admit a good name? charity will call it thereby.

It doth not λογίζεσθαι κακὸν, 'impute evil,' or put it to any man's account, beyond absolute necessity.

'It hopeth all things, and believeth all things;' hopeth and believeth all things for the best, in favor to its neighbor, concerning his intentions and actions liable to doubt.

It banisheth all evil surmises: it rejecteth all ill stories, malicious insinuations, perverse glosses and descants.

5. Another charitable practice is, to comport with the infirmities of our neighbor; according to that rule of St. Paul, 'We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves;' and that precept, 'Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'

Is a man wiser than his neighbor, or in any case freer of defects? charity will dispose to use that advantage so as not to contemn him, or insult over him; but to instruct him, to help him, to comfort him.

As we deal with children, allowing to the infirmities of their age, bearing their ignorance, frowardness, untoward humors, without distasting them; so should we with our brethren who labor under any weakness of mind or humor.

6. It is an act of charity to abstain from offending, or scandalising our brethren; by doing any thing, which either may occasion him to commit sin, or disaffect him to religion, or discourage him in the practice of duty, (that which St. Paul calleth to 'defile and smite his weak conscience,') or which anywise may discompose, vex, and grieve him: for, 'If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXVIII.

HEBREWS, CHAP. X.—VERSE 24.

THAT which is here recommended as the common duty of all Christians, may well be thought the special duty of those appointed to instruct and guide others: various considerations therefore are offered to excite and encourage men in this practice.

I. We must remember that we are men, and as such obliged to this duty, since it is very agreeable to human nature, the which, not being corrupted or distempered by ill use, inclines to it, approves it, and finds satisfaction and delight therein. St. Paul, when he charges us to have *a natural affection one toward another*, supposes this affection to be inbred to men, which should be stirred up, improved and exercised: this subject enlarged on.

II. We should consider what our neighbor is, how near in blood, how like in nature, how much in all considerable respects the same with us. Should any one wrong or defame our brother, we should be displeased; should we do it ourselves, or omit any office of kindness towards him, we should blame ourselves: yet every man is such, of one stock, of one blood with us; and as such may challenge and call for real affection from us. Every man also, as a Christian, is in a higher and nobler way allied to us; whence an improved charity is due to him on that score.

III. Equity plainly requires charity from us: for every one is ready not only to wish and seek, but to demand and claim love from others, so as to be offended, and to complain, if he

do not find it. In all reason and equity, if I would have another my friend, I must be a friend to him: hence the law of charity is well expressed in those terms *of doing to others whatever we would have them do to us.*

IV. Let us consider that charity is a right noble and worthy thing, tending greatly to perfect our nature, and dignify our soul: it is the imitation and copy of that immense love which is the fountain of all being and of all good: whilst therefore charity raises our nature towards that of heavenly beings, uncharitableness on the contrary debases us into an affinity with the meanest things, making us to become like beasts, or fiends.

V. The practice of charity is productive of many great benefits and advantages to us; so that to love our neighbor involves the truest love to ourselves: wherefore not only duty obliges, but interest encourages us in this matter, by a consideration of the manifold comforts and conveniences of life; some of which will be enumerated.

VI. 1. Charity frees our souls from those bad dispositions and passions which vex and disquiet them; banishing anger, envy, rancor, and revenge; stifling fear, suspicion, and jealousy of mischief intended against us; removing discontent or dissatisfaction in our state; curbing ambition and avarice, those impetuous, insatiable, and troublesome dispositions, &c.

VII. 2. It consequently settles the mind in a serene, calm, and cheerful state; in an even temper and harmonious order of soul.

VIII. 3. It preserves us from various external mischiefs and inconveniences to which our life is exposed; for if we have not charity towards men, we shall have enmity with them; and on that wait troops of mischiefs; this point enlarged on.

IX. 4. As charity preserves us from mischiefs, so it procures many sweet comforts and fair accommodations of life, by encompassing a man with friends, with many guards of his safety,

supports of his fortune, patrons of his reputation, succorers of his necessity, and comforters of his affliction.

X. 5. Charity does in every state yield advantages suitable thereto: it renders prosperity not only innocent and safe, but useful and fruitful to us: it solaces adversity by the consideration that it does not arise as a punishment for doing ill to others, and that it is not attended with the ill-will of men.

XI. 6. We may consider that, without the exercise of charity, all the goods and advantages we have, our best faculties of nature and best endowments of soul, the gifts of Providence and the fruits of our industry, will become vain and fruitless, or noxious and baneful to us: this point enlarged on.

XII. 7. Charity greatly amplifies and advances a man's state, putting him into the possession or fruition of all good things: a charitable man can never, in a moral account, be poor, or vile, or miserable, except all the world should be cast into penury and distress; for whilst his neighbor hath any thing, he will enjoy it.

XIII. 8. If therefore we love ourselves, we must love others, and do them good; since by this means we enable and dispose them to make grateful returns, and besides all other benefits, we get that of their prayers, which of all prayers have a most favorable audience and efficacy.

XIV. We may consider that charity is a practice specially grateful to God, and a most excellent part of our duty.

XV. Seeing also that God vouchsafes to esteem whatever is done in charity to our neighbors (if done with an honest pious mind, as to his friends) to be done unto himself, we become in a manner benefactors to him, and shall be accordingly requited.

XVI. We may consider that charity is a very feasible and easy duty, requiring no sore pain, no grievous trouble, no great cost: for it consists only in good will, and that which naturally springs from thence.

XVII. It is the best, most easy, and most expedite way of performing all other duties towards our neighbor; for *love is the fulfilling of the law.*

XVIII. Charity gives worth, form, and life to all virtue; so that without it no action is valuable in itself, or acceptable to God: this subject enlarged on.

XIX. So great benefits doth charity yield: yet if it did not yield any of them, it would deserve and claim our observance; for it carries a reward and a heaven in itself, the very same which constitutes God himself infinitely happy, and beatifies every blessed spirit in proportion to its capacity and exercise thereof.

XX. Whereas the great obstacle to charity is self-love, or an extravagant fondness of our own interests, yet uncharitableness destroys that; for how can we love ourselves, if we have not charity? how can we appear lovely to ourselves, if we are destitute of so worthy an endowment?

These are some considerable inducements to the practice of this great virtue: others of a higher nature are reserved for another discourse.

SERMON XXVIII.

MOTIVES AND ARGUMENTS TO CHARITY.

HEBREWS, CHAP. X.—VERSE 24.

Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

THAT which is here recommended by the Apostle, as the common duty of Christians toward each other, on emergent occasions, with zeal and care to provoke one another to the practice of charity and beneficence, may well be conceived the special duty of those, whose office it is to instruct and guide others, when opportunity is afforded: with that obligation I shall now comply, by representing divers considerations serving to excite and encourage us to that practice: this (without premising any description or explication of the duty; the nature, special acts, and properties whereof I have already declared) I shall immediately undertake.

I. First then, I desire you to remember and consider that you are men, and as such obliged to this duty, as being very agreeable to human nature; the which, not being corrupted or distempered by ill use, doth incline to it, doth call for it, doth like and approve it, doth find satisfaction and delight therein.

St. Paul chargeth us to be *εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι*, or 'to have a natural affection one toward another:' that supposeth a *στοργὴ* inbred to men, which should be roused up, improved, and exercised. Such an one indeed there is, which, although often raked up and smothered in the common attendances on the

providing for our needs, and prosecuting our affairs, will on occasion more or less break forth and discover itself

That the constitution and frame of our nature disposeth to it, we cannot but feel, when our bowels are touched with a sensible pain at the view of any calamitous object; when our fancies are disturbed at the report of any disaster befalling a man; when the sight of a tragedy wringeth compassion and tears from us: which affections we can hardly quash by any reflexion, that such events, true or feigned, do not concern ourselves.

Hence doth nature so strongly affect society, and abhor solitude; so that a man cannot enjoy himself alone, or find satisfaction in any good without a companion: not only for that he then cannot receive, but also because he cannot impart assistance, consolation, and delight in converse: for men do not affect society only that they may obtain benefits thereby; but as much or more, that they may be enabled to communicate them; nothing being more distasteful than to be always on the taking hand: neither indeed hath any thing a more pleasant and savory relish than to do good; as even Epicurus, the great patron of pleasure, did confess.

The practice of benignity, of courtesy, of clemency, do at first sight, without aid of any discursive reflexion, obtain approbation and applause from men; being acceptable and amiable to their mind, as beauty to their sight, harmony to their hearing, fragrancy to their smell, and sweetness to their taste: and, correspondently, uncharitable dispositions and practices (malignity, harshness, cruelty) do offend the mind with a disgustful resentment of them.

We may appeal to the conscience of each man, if he doth not feel dissatisfaction in that fierceness or frowardness of temper, which produceth uncharitableness; if he have not a complacence in that sweet and calm disposition of soul, whence charity doth issue; if he do not condemn himself for the one, and approve himself in the other practice.

This is the common judgment of men; and therefore in common language this practice is styled humanity, as best sorting with our nature, and becoming it; and the principle whence it springeth is called good-nature: and the contrary practice is

styled inhumanity, as thwarting our natural inclinations, or divesting us of manhood; and its source likewise is termed ill-nature, or a corruption of our nature.

It is therefore a monstrous paradox, crossing the common sense of men, which in this loose and vain world hath lately got such vogue, that all men naturally are enemies one to another: it pretendeth to be grounded on common observation and experience; but it is only an observing the worst actions of the worst men; of dissolute ruffians, of villainous cheats, of ravenous oppressors, of malicious politicians, of such degenerate apostates from humanity; by whose practice (debauched by vain conceits and naughty customs) an ill measure is taken of mankind. Aristotle himself, who had observed things as well as any of these men, and with as sharp a judgment, affirmeth the contrary, that all men are friends, and disposed to entertain friendly correspondence with one another: indeed to say the contrary is a blasphemy against the author of our nature; and is spoken no less out of profane enmity against him, than out of venomous malignity against men: out of hatred to God and goodness they would disparage and vilify the noblest work of God's creation; yet do they, if we sound the bottom of their mind, imply themselves to admire this quality, and by their decrying it do commend it: for it is easy to discern that therefore only they slander mankind as uncapable of goodness, because out of malignity they would not allow it so excellent a quality.

II. Let us consider what our neighbor is; how near in blood, how like in nature, how much in all considerable respects the same with us he is.

Should any one wrong or defame our brother, we should be displeased; should we do it ourselves, or should we omit any office of kindness toward him, we should blame ourselves: every man is such, of one stock, of one blood with us; and as such may challenge and call for real affection from us.

Should any one mar, tear, or deface our picture, or show any kind of disrespect thereto, we should be offended, taking it for an indignity put on ourselves; and as for ourselves, we should never in such a manner affront or despite ourselves: every man is such, our most lively image, representing us most

exactly in all the main figures and features of body, of soul, of state; we thence do owe respect to every one.

Every man is another self, partaker of the same nature, endued with the same faculties, subject to the same laws, liable to the same fortunes; distinguished from us only in accidental and variable circumstances: whence if we be amiable or estimable, so is he on the same grounds; and acting impartially (according to right judgment) we should yield love and esteem to him: by slighting, hating, injuring, hurting him we do consequentially abuse ourselves, or acknowlege ourselves deservedly liable to the same usage.

Every man, as a Christian, is in a higher and nobler way allied, assimilated, and identified to us; to him therefore on the like grounds improved charity is more due; and we wrong our heavenly relations, our better nature, our more considerable selves, in withholding it from him.

III. Equity doth plainly require charity from us: for every one is ready not only to wish and seek, but to demand and claim love from others; so as to be much offended, and grievously to complain, if he do not find it.

We do all conceive love and respect due to us from all men; we take all men bound to wish and tender our welfare; we suppose our need to require commiseration and succor from every man: if it be refused, we think it a hard case, and that we are ill used; we cry out of wrong, of discourtesy, of inhumanity, of baseness, practised toward us.

A moderate respect and affection will hardly satisfy us; we pretend to them in the highest degree, disgusting the least appearance of disregard or disaffection; we can scarce better digest indifference than hatred.

This evidenceth our opinion and conscience to be, that we ought to pay the greatest respect and kindness to our neighbor; for it is plainly unjust and ridiculously vain to require that from others which we refuse to others, who may demand it on the same title; nor can we without self-condemnation practise that which we detest in others.

In all reason and equity, if I would have another my friend, I must be a friend to him; if I pretend to charity from all men, I must render it to all in the same kind and measure.

Hence is the law of charity well expressed in those terms, 'of doing to others whatever we would have them do to us;' whereby the palpable equity of this practice is demonstrated.

IV. Let us consider that charity is a right noble and worthy thing; greatly perfective of our nature; much dignifying and beautifying our soul.

It rendereth a man truly great, enlarging his mind unto a vast circumference, and to a capacity near infinite; so that it by a general care doth reach all things, by an universal affection doth embrace and grasp the world.

By it our reason obtaineth a field or scope of employment worthy of it, not confined to the slender interests of one person or one place, but extending to the concerns of all men.

Charity is the imitation and copy of that immense love, which is the fountain of all being and all good; which made all things, which preserveth the world, which sustaineth every creature: nothing advance thus so near to a resemblance of him, who is essential love and goodness; who freely and purely, without any regard to his own advantage or capacity of finding any beneficial return, doth bear and express the highest good-will, with a liberal hand pouring down showers of bounty and mercy on all his creatures; who daily putteth up numberless indignities and injuries, upholding and maintaining those who offend and provoke him.

Charity rendereth us as angels, or peers to those glorious and blessed creatures, who, without receiving or expecting any requital from us, do heartily desire and delight in our good, are ready to promote it, do willingly serve and labor for it. Nothing is more amiable, more admirable, more venerable, even in the common eye and opinion of men; it hath in it a beauty and a majesty apt to ravish every heart; even a spark of it in generosity of dealing breedeth admiration, a glimpse of it in formal courtesy of behavior procureth much esteem, being deemed to accomplish and adorn a man: how lovely therefore and truly gallant is an entire, sincere, constant and uniform practice thereof, issuing from pure good-will and affection!

Love indeed or goodness (for true love is nothing else but goodness exerting itself, in direction toward objects capable of its influence) is the only amiable and only honorable thing:

power and wit may be admired by some, or have some fond idolaters; but being severed from goodness, or abstracted from their subserviency to it, they cannot obtain real love, they deserve not any esteem: for the worst, the most unhappy, the most odious and contemptible of beings do partake of them in a high measure; the prince of darkness hath more power, and reigneth with absolute sovereignty over more subjects by many than the Great Turk; one devil may have more wit than all the politic Achitophels, and all the profane Hectors in the world; yet with all his power and all his wit he is most wretched, most detestable, and most despicable: and such in proportion is every one who partaketh in his accursed dispositions of malice and uncharitableness. For,

On the other side uncharitableness is a very mean and base thing: it contracteth a man's soul into a narrow compass, or straiteneth it as it were into one point; drawing all his thoughts, his desires, his affections into himself, as to their centre; so that his reason, his will, his activity have but one pitiful object to exercise themselves about: to scrape together a little pelf, to catch a vapor of fame, to prog for a frivolous semblance of power or dignity, to sooth the humor or pamper the sensuality of one poor worm, is the ignoble subject of his busy care and endeavor.

By it we debase ourselves into an affinity with the meanest things, becoming either like beasts or fiends; like beasts, affecting only our own present sensible good; or like fiends, designing mischief and trouble to others.

It is indeed hard for a man without charity, not to be worse than an innocent beast; not at least to be as a fox, or a wolf; either cunningly lurching, or violently ravening for prey: love only can restrain a man from flying at all, and seizing on whatever he meeteth; from biting, from worrying, from devouring every one that is weaker than himself, or who cannot defend himself from his paws and teeth.

V. The practice of charity is productive of many great benefits and advantages to us: so that to love our neighbor doth involve the truest love to ourselves; and we are not only obliged in duty, but may be encouraged by our interest thereto: beatitude is often pronounced to it, or to some particular instan-

ces of it: and well may it be so, for it indeed will constitute a man happy, producing to him manifold comforts and conveniences of life: some whereof we shall touch.

VI. 1. Charity doth free our souls of all those bad dispositions and passions which vex and disquiet them: from those gloomy passions, which cloud our mind; from those keen passions which fret our heart; from those tumultuous passions which ruffle us, and discompose the frame of our soul.

It stifleth anger, (that swoon of reason, transporting a man out of himself;) for a man hardly can be incensed against those whom he tenderly loveth: a petty neglect, a hard word, a small discourtesy will not fire a charitable soul; the greatest affront or wrong can hardly kindle rage therein.

It banisheth envy, (that severely just vice, which never faileth to punish itself;) for no man will repine at his wealth or prosperity, no man will malign his worth or virtue, whose good he charitably desireth and wisheth.

It excludeth rancor and spite, those dispositions which create a hell in our soul; which are directly repugnant to charity, and thereby dispelled as darkness by light, cold by heat.

It suffereth not revenge (that canker of the heart) to harbor in our breast; for who can intend mischief to him, in whose good he delighteth, in whose evil he feeleth displeasure?

It voideth fear, suspicion, jealousy of mischief designed against us: the which passions 'have torment,' or do punish us, as St. John saith, racking us with anxious expectation of evil; wherefore 'there is,' saith he, 'no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear:' no man indeed is apt to fear him whom he loveth, or is able much to love him whom he feareth: for love esteemeth its object as innocent, fear apprehendeth it as hurtful; love disposeth to follow and embrace, fear inclineth to decline and shun. To suspect a friend therefore is to disavow him for such; and on slender grounds to conceit ill of him, is to deem him unworthy of our love. The innocence and inoffensiveness of charity, which provoketh no man to do us harm, doth also breed great security and confidence: any man will think he may walk unarmed and unguarded among those to whom he beareth good-will, to whom he neither

meaneth nor doeth any harm; being guarded by a good conscience, and shielded with innocence.

It removeth discontent or dissatisfaction in our state; the which usually doth spring from ill conceits and surmises about our neighbor, or from wrathful and spiteful affections toward him: for while men have good respect and kindness for their neighbors, they seldom are dissatisfied in their own condition; they can never want comfort, or despair of succor.

It curbeth ambition and avarice; those impetuous, those insatiable, those troublesome dispositions: for a man will not affect to climb above those in whose honor he findeth satisfaction; nor to scramble with them for the goods which he gladly would have them to enjoy: a competency will satisfy him, who taketh himself but for one among the rest, and who can as little endure to see others want as himself: who would trouble himself to get power over those, to overtop them in dignity and fame, to surpass them in wealth, whom he is ready to serve in the meanest offices of kindness, whom he would in honor prefer to himself, unto whom he will liberally communicate what he hath for his comfort and relief?

In the prevalence of such bad passions and dispositions of soul our misery doth most consist; thence the chief troubles and inconveniences of our life do proceed: wherefore charity doth highly deserve of us in freeing us from them.

VII. 2. It consequently doth settle our mind in a serene, calm, sweet, and cheerful state; in an even temper, and good humor, and harmonious order of soul; which ever will result from the evacuation of bad passions, from the composure of such as are indifferent, from the excitement of those which are good and pleasant: 'the fruits of the spirit,' saith St. Paul, 'are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,' (or benignity:) love precedeth, joy and peace follow as its constant attendants, gentleness and benignity come after as its certain effects.

Love indeed is the sweetest of all passions, ever accompanied with a secret delectation and pleasant sense; whenever it is placed on a good object, when it acteth in a rational way, when it is vigorous, it must needs yield much joy.

It therefore greatly conduceth to our happiness, or rather alone doth suffice to constitute us happy.

VIII. 3. Charity will preserve us from divers external mischiefs and inconveniences, to which our life is exposed, and which otherwise we shall incur.

If we have not charity towards men, we shall have enmity with them; and on that do wait troops of mischief: we shall enjoy nothing quietly or safely, we shall do nothing without opposition or contention; no conversation, no commerce will be pleasant; clamor, obloquy, tumult, and trouble will surround us; we shall live in perpetual danger, the enmity of the meanest and weakest creature being formidable.

But all such mischiefs charity will prevent or remove; damming up the fountains, or extirpating the roots of them: for who will hate a person that apparently loveth him? who can be so barbarous or base as to hurt that man, whom he findeth ever ready to do himself good? what brute, what devil can find in his heart to be a foe to him who is a sure friend to all? No publican can be so wretchedly vile, no sinner so destitute of goodness; for, 'If,' saith our Lord, on common experience, 'ye love them which love you, what reward have ye; do not even the publicans the same?' and, 'If ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same:' it seemeth beyond the greatest degeneracy and corruption whereof human nature is capable, to requite charity with enmity, yea not to return some kindness for it: Τίς ὁ κακώσων; 'who,' saith St. Peter, 'is he that will do you hurt, if ye be followers of that which is good;' or imitators of him that is good, (of the sovereign goodness?) none surely can be so unjust, or so unworthy.

As charity restraineth us from doing any wrong, or yielding any offence to others in thought, in word, in deed; from entertaining any bad conceits without ground, from hatching any mischievous designs against our neighbor; from using any harsh, virulent, biting language; from any rugged, discourteous, disobliging behaviour; from any wrongful, rigorous, severe dealing toward him; from any contemptuous pride, or supercilious arrogance: so it consequently will defend us from the like

treatment; for scarce any man is so malicious as without any provocation to do mischief; no man is so incorrigibly savage, as to persist in committing outrage on perfect innocence, joined with patience, with meekness, with courtesy: charity will melt the hardest heart, and charm the fiercest spirit; it will bind the most violent hand, it will still the most obstreperous tongue; it will reconcile the most offended, most prejudiced heart: it is the best guard that can be of our safety from assaults, of our interest from damage, of our reputation from slander, detraction, and reproach.

If you would have examples of this, experience will afford many; and some we have in the sacred records commended to our observation: Esau was a rough man, and one who had been exceedingly provoked by his brother Jacob; yet how did meek and respectful demeanor overcome him! so that Esau, it is said in the history, 'ran to meet him, (Jacob,) and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.'

Saul was a man possessed with a furious envy and spite against David; yet into what expressions did the sense of his kind dealing force him! 'Is this thy voice, my son David?'—'Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil:—behold I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.' So doth charity subdue and triumph over the most inveterate prejudices and the most violent passions of men.

If peace and quiet be desirable things, as certainly they are, and that form implieth, when by wishing peace with men, we are understood to wish all good to them; it is charity only that preserveth them: which more surely than any power or policy doth quash all war and strife; for war must have parties, and strife implieth resistance: be it the first or second blow which maketh the fray, charity will avoid it; for it neither will strike the first in offence, nor the second in revenge. Charity therefore may well be styled 'the bond of peace,' it being that only which can knit men's souls together, and keep them from breaking out into dissensions.

It alone is that which will prevent bickering and clashing about points of credit or interest: if we love not our neighbor, or tender not his good as our own, we shall be ever in competition

and debate with him about those things, not suffering him to enjoy any thing quietly; struggling to get above him, scrambling with him for what is to be had.

IX. 4. As charity preserveth from mischiefs, so it procureth many sweet comforts and fair accommodations of life.

Friendship is a most useful and pleasant thing, and charity will conciliate good store thereof: it is apt to make all men friends; for love is the only general philter and effectual charm of souls; the fire which kindleth all it toucheth, and propagateth itself in every capable subject: and such a subject is every man in whom humanity is not quite extinct; and hardly can any such man be, seeing every man hath some good humor in him, some blood, some kindly juice flowing in his veins; no man wholly doth consist of dusky melancholy, or fiery choler; whence all men may be presumed liable to the powerful impressions of charity: its mild and serene countenance, its sweet and gentle speech, its courteous and obliging gesture, its fair dealing, its benign conversation, its readiness to do any good or service to any man, will insinuate good-will and respect into all hearts.

It thence will encompass a man with friends, with many guards of his safety, with many supports of his fortune, with many patrons of his reputation, with many succorers of his necessity, with many comforters of his affliction: for is a charitable man in danger, who will not defend him? is he falling, who will not uphold him? is he falsely accused or aspersed, who will not vindicate him? is he in distress, who will not pity him? who will not endeavor to relieve and restore him? who will insult over his calamity? will it not in such cases appear a common duty, a common interest to assist and countenance a common friend, a common benefactor to mankind?

Whereas most of our life is spent in society and discourse, charity is that which doth season and sweeten these, rendering them grateful to others, and commodious to one's self: for a charitable heart is a sweet spring, from whence do issue streams of wholesome and pleasant discourse; it not being troubled with any bad passion or design, which may sour or foul conversation, doth ever make him good company to others, and rendereth them such to himself; which is a mighty convenience.

In short, a charitable man, or, 'true lover of men will,' saith St. Chrysostom, 'inhabit earth as a heaven, every where carrying a serenity with him, and plaiting ten thousand crowns for himself.' Again,

X. 5. Charity doth in every estate yield advantages suitable thereto; bettering it, and improving it to our benefit.

It rendereth prosperity not only innocent and safe, but useful and fruitful to us; we then indeed enjoy it, if we feel the comfort of doing good by it: it solaceth adversity, considering that it doth not arise as a punishment or fruit of ill-doing to others; that it is not attended with the deserved ill-will of men; that no man hath reason to delight for it, or insult over us therein; that we may probably expect commiseration and relief, having been ready to show the like to others.

It tempereth both states: for in prosperity a man cannot be transported with immoderate joy, when so many objects of pity and grief do present themselves before him, which he is apt deeply to resent; in adversity he cannot be dejected with extreme sorrow, being refreshed by so many good successes befalling those whom he loveth: one condition will not puff him up, being sensible of his neighbor's misery; the other will not sink him down, having complacence in his neighbor's welfare. Uncharitableness (proceeding from contrary causes, and producing contrary effects) doth spoil all conditions, rendering prosperity fruitless, and adversity comfortless.

XI. 6. We may consider that secluding the exercise of charity, all the goods and advantages we have (our best faculties of nature, our best endowments of soul, the gifts of Providence, and the fruits of our industry) will become vain and fruitless, or noxious and baneful to us; for what is our reason worth, what doth it signify, if it serveth only for contriving sorry designs, or transacting petty affairs about ourselves? what is wit good for, if it must be spent only in making sport, or hatching mischief? to what purpose is knowlege, if it be not applied to the instruction, direction, admonition, or consolation of others? what mattereth abundance of wealth, if it be to be uselessly hoarded up, or vainly flung away in wicked or wanton profuseness; if it be not employed in affording succor to our neighbor's indigency and distress? what is our credit but a

mere noise or a puff of air, if we do not give a solidity and substance to it, by making it an engine of doing good? what is our virtue itself, if it be buried in obscurity or choked with idleness, yielding no benefit to others by the lustre of its example, or by its real influence? what is any talent, if it be wrapped up in a napkin; any light, if it be hid under a bushel; any thing private, if it be not by good use spread out and improved to public benefit? If these gifts do minister only to our own particular advantage, to our personal convenience, glory, or pleasure, how slim things are they, how inconsiderable is their worth!

But they being managed by charity become precious and excellent things; they are great in proportion to the greatness of their use, or the extent of their beneficial influence: as they carry forth good to the world, so they bring back various benefits to ourselves; they return into our bosom laden with respect and reward from God and from man; they yield thanks and commendation from without, they work comfort and satisfaction within: yea, which is infinitely more considerable, and enhanceth the price of our gifts to a vast rate, they procure glory and blessing to God; for 'hereby is God glorified, if we bring forth much fruit:' and no good fruit can grow from any other stock than that of charity.

Uncharitableness therefore should be loathed and shunned by us as that which robbeth us of all our ornaments and advantages; which indeed marreth and corrupteth all our good things; which turneth blessings into curses, and rendereth the means of our welfare to be causes of mischief to us: for without charity a man can have no goods, but goods worldly and temporal; and such goods thence do prove impertinent baubles, burdensome incumbrances, dangerous snares, baneful poisons to him.

XII. 7. Charity doth hugely advance and amplify a man's state, putting him into the possession or fruition of all good things: it will endow, enrich, ennoble, embellish us with all the world hath of precious, of glorious, of fair; by appropriation thereof to ourselves, and acquiring of a real interest therein. What men commonly out of fond self-love do vainly affect, that infallibly by being charitable they may compass, the ea-

grossing to themselves all kinds of good: most easily, most innocently, in a compendious and sure way, without any sin or blame, without any care or pain, without any danger or trouble, they may come to attain and to enjoy whatever in common esteem is desirable or valuable; they may, without greedy avarice, or the carkings, the drudgeries, the disgraces going with it, procure to themselves abundant wealth; without fond ambition, or the difficulties, the hazards, the emulations, the strugglings to which it is liable, they may arrive to great honor; without sordid voluptuousness, or the satieties, the maladies, the regrets consequent thereon, they may enjoy all pleasure; without any wildness or wantonness, pride, luxury, sloth, any of its temptations and snares, they may have all prosperity; they may get all learning and wisdom without laborious study, all virtue and goodness without the fatigues of continual exercise: for are not all these things yours, if you do esteem them so, if you do make them so by finding much delight and satisfaction in them? doth not your neighbor's wealth enrich you, if you feel content in his possessing and using it? doth not his preferment advance you, if your spirit riseth with it in a gladsome complacence? doth not his pleasure delight you, if you relish his enjoyment of it? doth not his prosperity bless you, if your heart doth exult and triumph in it? do not his endowments adorn you, if you like them, if you commend them, if the use of them doth minister comfort and joy to you? This is the divine magic of charity, which conveyeth all things into our hands, and instateth us in a dominion of them, whereof nothing can disseize us; by virtue whereof being, as St. Paul speaketh of himself 'sorrowful, we yet always rejoice; having nothing, we yet possess all things.'

Neither is this property in things merely imaginary or fantastic, (like that of lunatics, who fancy themselves mighty princes or rich aldermen,) but very substantial and real; yea far more real to the charitable person, than it is commonly to those, who in legal or popular account are masters of them: for how is propriety in things otherwise considerable, than for the content and pleasure which they yield to the presumed owner? the which if a charitable person abundantly draweth

from them, why are they not truly his? why is not the tree his, if he can pull and taste its fruits without injury or blame? yea doth not the propriety more really belong to him as to the gross possessor, if he doth equally enjoy the benefit, without partaking the inconveniences and impurities adherent to them; if he taste them innocently and purely, without being cloyed, without being distracted, without being puffed, without being incumbered, insnared, or corrupted by them?

A charitable man therefore can never, in a moral account, be poor, or vile, or anywise miserable; except all the world should be cast into penury and distress: for while his neighbor hath anything, he will enjoy it; 'rejoicing with those that rejoice,' as the Apostle doth enjoin.

XIII. 8. If therefore we love ourselves, we must love others, and do others good; charitable beneficence carrying with it so many advantages to ourselves.

We by charitable complacence do partake in their welfare, reaping pleasure from all the fruits of their industry and fortune.

We by charitable assistance do enable and dispose them to make grateful returns of succor in our need.

We thence assuredly shall obtain their good-will, their esteem, their commendation; we shall maintain peaceable and comfortable intercourse with them, in safety, in quiet, in good humor and cheer.

Besides all other benefits we shall get that of their prayers; the which of all prayers have a most favorable audience and assured efficacy: for if the complaints and curses of those who are oppressed or neglected by uncharitable dealing do certainly reach God's ears, and pull down vengeance from above; how much more will the intercessions and blessings of the poor pierce the heavens, and thence draw recompense! seeing God is more ready to perform his proper and pleasant works of bounty and mercy, than to execute his strange and unpleasing work of punishment; especially the blessings of the poor being always accompanied with praises and glorifications of him, who enableth and disposeth men to do good; the which praises will ever be reckoned on the account of him who drew

them forth by his beneficence: it will be, as the Apostle saith, 'fruit redounding to his account,' while 'it aboundeth by many thanksgivings to God.'

So in virtue of charity the poorest man amply may requite the wealthiest; and a peasant may outdo the greatest prince in beneficence.

XIV. We may consider that charity is a practice specially grateful to God, and a most excellent part of our duty; not only because he hath commanded it as such with greatest earnestness; nor only because it doth constitute us in nearest resemblance of him; but as a peculiar expression of love and good-will toward him: for if we love him, we must for his sake have a kindness for his friends, we must tender his interests, we must favor his reputation, we must desire his content and pleasure, we must contribute our endeavors toward the furtherance of these his concerns. Seeing then God is an assured friend to all men, seeing he hath a property in all men, (for he is God and Lord of all,) seeing he much concerneth himself for all men's welfare; seeing from the prosperity, from the virtue, from the happiness of every man he gaineth honor and praise; seeing he is greatly satisfied and delighted in the good of men; we also must love them; otherwise we greatly shall disoblige and disgust him.

Is it not indeed a practice guilty of notorious enmity toward him, inconsistent with the maintenance of any friendship or peace with him, to discord in affection from him, maligning or disaffecting those whom he dearly loveth and favoreth; who are so nearly allied to him by manifold relations, as his creatures, his subjects, his servants, his children, whom he designeth and desireth to crown with eternal glory and bliss?

XV. Seeing God vouchsafeth to esteem whatever is done in charity to our neighbor (if done with an honest and pious mind, as to his friends) to be done unto himself; that in feeding our indigent neighbor we refresh him; in clothing our neighbor we comfort him; we do by charitable beneficence oblige God, and become in a manner benefactors to him; and as such assuredly shall be requited by him: and is not this a high privilege, a great honor, a mighty advantage to us? If a man had opportunity to do that, which his prince would acknowlege a

courtesy and obligation to him, what a happiness would he account it! and how far more considerable is it, that we can so easily do that which the Lord of all, in whose disposal all things are, will take so kindly at our hands!

XVI. We may consider that charity is a very feasible and very easy duty; it requireth no sore pain, no grievous trouble, no great cost: for it consisteth only in good-will, and that which naturally springeth thence; willingness and cheerfulness are necessary ingredients or adjuncts of it; the which imply facility: whence the weakest and poorest man is no less able to perform it than the greatest potentate; his heart may be as charitable, though his hand cannot be so liberal: one of the most noble and most famous charities that ever was, was the giving two mites; and the 'giving a cup of cold water' is the instance of that beneficence, which shall not fail of being rewarded.

XVII. We may consider that charity is the best, the most assured, the most easy and expedite way or instrument of performing all other duties toward our neighbor: if we would dispatch, love, and all is done; if we would be perfect in obedience, love, and we shall not fail in any point; for 'love is the fulfilling of the law;' love 'is the bond of perfectness:' would we be secure in the practice of justice, of meekness, of humility toward all men, of constant fidelity toward our friends, of gentle moderation toward our enemies, of loyalty toward our superiors, of benignity toward our inferiors; if we would be sure to purify our minds from ill thoughts, to restrain our tongues from ill speaking, to abstain from all bad demeanor and dealing; it is but having charity, and infallibly you will do all this: for 'love worketh no ill to its neighbor; love thinketh no evil;' 'love behaveth not itself unseemly.'

Would we discharge all our duties without any reluctancy or regret, with much satisfaction and pleasure? love will certainly dispose us thereto; for it always acteth freely and cheerfully, without any compulsion or straining; it is ever accompanied with delectation: if we would know its way and virtue of acting, we may see it represented in the proceeding of Jacob, who being inspired by love did contentedly and without regret endure so long and hard toil, such disappointments and such

affronts: 'And Jacob,' saith the text, 'served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her.'

This is the root, from whence voluntary obedience doth naturally grow; if it be planted in our heart, we need not fear but that all kind of good fruit will sprout forth into conversation and practice.

But without it we shall not ever perform any good work perfectly, steadily, in a kindly manner: no other principle will serve; if we are only moved by whip and spur, driven on by fear, or incited by hope, we shall go forward unwillingly and dully, often halting, ever flagging: those principles which do put slaves and mercenaries on action, as they are not so noble and worthy, so neither are they so effectual and sure; as ambition, vain-glory, self-interest, design of security, of profit, of compliance with the expectation of men, &c.

XVIII. Charity giveth worth, form, and life to all virtue, so that without it no action is valuable in itself, or acceptable to God.

Sever it from courage; and what is that, but the boldness or fierceness of a beast? from meekness; and what is that but the softness of a woman, or weakness of a child? from courtesy; and what is that but affectation or artifice? from justice; what is that but humor or policy? from wisdom; what is that but craft and subtilty?

What meaneth faith without it but dry opinion; what hope, but blind presumption; what alms-doing, but ambitious ostentation; what undergoing martyrdom, but stiffness or sturdiness of resolution; what is devotion, but glozing or mocking with God? what is any practice, how specious soever in appearance, or materially good, but an issue of self-conceit or self-will, of servile fear or mercenary design? 'Though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing; though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.'

But charity doth sanctify every action, and impregnate all our practice with a savor of goodness, turning all we do into virtue; it is true fortitude and gallantry indeed, when a man

out of charity and hearty design to promote his neighbor's good doth encounter dangers and difficulties; it is genuine meekness, when a man out of charity, and unwillingness to hurt his neighbor, doth patiently comport with injuries and discourtesies; it is virtuous courtesy, when cordial affection venteth itself in civil language, in respectful deportment, in obliging performances; it is excellent justice, when a man, regarding his neighbor's case as his own, doth unto him as he would have it done to himself; it is admirable wisdom, which sagaciously contriveth and dexterously manageth things with the best advantage toward its neighbor's good: it is a worthy faith, which being spirited and actuated by charity, doth produce goodly fruits of beneficence; it is a sound and solid hope, which is grounded on that everlasting foundation of charity, which 'never doth fail,' or fall away; it is sincere alms, which not only the hand, but the heart doth reach forth; it is an acceptable sacrifice, which is kindled by the holy fire of fervent affection; it is a pure devotion, which is offered up with a calm and benign mind, resembling the disposition of that goodness which it adoreth.

If therefore we would do any thing well, if we would not lose all the virtue, and forfeit all the benefit of what we perform, we must follow the rule of St. Paul, 'to do all our works in charity.'

XIX. So great benefits doth charity yield; yet if it did not yield any of them, it would deserve and claim our observance; without regard to its sweet fruits and beneficial consequences, it were to be embraced and cherished; for it carrieth a reward and a heaven in itself; the very same which constituteth God himself infinitely happy, and which beatifieth every blessed spirit, in proportion to its capacity and exercise thereof: a man doth abundantly enjoy himself in that steady composedness, and savory complacence of mind, which ever doth attend it; and as the present sense, so is the memory of it, or the good conscience of having done good, very delicious and satisfactory.

As it is a rascally delight (tempered with regret, and vanishing into bitterness) which men feel in wreaking spite, or doing mischief; such as they cannot reflect on without disgust and con-

demning their base impotency of soul: so is the pleasure which charity doth breed altogether pure, grateful to the mind, and increasing by reflexion; never perishing or decaying; a man eternally enjoying the good he hath done, by remembering and ruminating thereon. In fine,

XX. Whereas the great obstacle to charity is self-love, or an extravagant fondness for our own interests, yet uncharitableness destroyeth that: for how can we love ourselves if we do want charity? how can we appear lovely to ourselves, if we are destitute of so worthy an endowment? or if we can discern those unworthy dispositions which accompany the defect of it; can we esteem so mean, so vile, so ugly things as we then are? Aristotle saith that bad men cannot be friends to themselves, because 'having in themselves nothing amiable, they can feel no affection toward themselves;' and certainly, if we are not stark blind, or can but see wrath, spite, envy, revenge, in their own black and ugly hue, we must needs (if they do possess our souls) grow odious and despicable to ourselves. And being they do rob us of so many great benefits, and bring so many grievous mischiefs on us, we cannot be otherwise than enemies to ourselves by cherishing them, or suffering them to lodge in us.

These are some very considerable inducements to the practice of this great virtue: there are divers others of a higher nature, derivable from the inmost bowels of our religion, grounded on its peculiar constitution and obligations, which I shall now forbear to mention, reserving them for a particular discourse by themselves.

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXIX.

ROMANS, CHAP. XII.—VERSE 18.

THIS chapter contains many excellent and wholesome precepts, from which one is selected for the text, which seems particularly seasonable for the condition of the times.

I. Concerning the advice itself, or substance of the duty charged on us, we may notice that, whether it be applied to the public state of things, or to private conversation, it imports, 1. not barely a negation of doing or suffering harm, an abstinence from strife and violence, but a positive amity and disposition to perform such kind offices, without which good correspondence among men could not be kept up: 2. it implies not some few transitory performances, proceeding from casual humor and the like, but a constant, well-settled condition of being, a continual cessation from injury, and promptitude to do good offices: 3. living in peace supposes a reciprocal condition; not only a performing good and forbearing to do bad offices, but a receiving the like treatment from others: 4. and not only an outward cessation of violence, and seeming demonstration of amity, but an inward will and resolution to continue therein.

II. In the next place we may consider the object of this duty, signified in the words, *with all men*. We often meet in Scripture with exhortations directed peculiarly to Christians, to be at peace among themselves: instances quoted: but here the duty has a more large and comprehensive object, as in the epistle to the Hebrews, xii. 14. it applies to men of all degrees and estates, high and low, rich and poor; of

all tempers and dispositions; of all endowments, judgments, and persuasions: this vast and boundless term, *all men*, contains them all.

III. We may consider the qualification of the duty here expressed, and what those words mean, *if it be possible, as much as lieth in you*. To which purpose, it may be observed that from our description of living peaceably, it consists mainly of two parts; one active, or proceeding from us and terminating on others; the other passive, issuing from others and terminated on ourselves; whereof the former is altogether in our power, and we are directly obliged to it by virtue of those words, *as much as lieth in you*; the latter is not fully so, though commonly there be probable means of effecting it, which we are hence bound to use, although they may sometimes fail of success: for the words, *if it be possible*, intimate that sometimes our labor may be lost, and our purpose defeated. However by this rule we are directed not only ourselves not to infringe the terms of peace toward others, but to endeavor by all honest and prudent means to obtain the good-will, favor, and respect of men, by which they may be disposed to cultivate a good understanding with us.

The words being thus superficially explained, a more large and punctual review of them is entered on: and first it is considered, what are those especial duties which are included in this more comprehensive one of *living peaceably* with all men: and, 1. we are by this precept directly obliged to love, that is, to bear good-will to all; at least not to hate, repine at the success, or rejoice in the misfortunes of any: for as it is hard to be at peace with those we do not truly love, so it is impossible to be so long with those we hate, &c. 2. We are hence obliged to perform all kind offices, which the condition of any man can require, and which we can perform without considerable detriment or inconvenience to ourselves or others. 3. In this duty is included an obligation

to all kind of just and honest dealing with all men; for justice in its own nature is, and by common agreement has been designed, the guardian of peace, and sovereign remedy of contention. 4. It much conduces to the preservation of peace and amicable correspondence in all dealings liable to doubt and debate, not to insist on nice and rigorous points of right, not to take all advantage offered to us, or to use extremities to the damage of others, without any proportionate benefit to ourselves. 5. We must use towards all men such demonstrations of respect and courtesy, to which, according to their stations, custom intitles them, or which on the common score of humanity they may reasonably expect from us. 6. This precept directly prohibits the use of reproachful, scornful, and provoking language; such being the immediate results of enmity, and actual breach of peace: this point enlarged on. 7. If we desire to live peaceably with all men, we must be equitable in censuring men's actions, candid in our interpretation of their meanings, mild in reprehending, and sparing to relate their miscarriages, &c. 8. We must be disposed to overlook such lesser faults committed against us, as make no great breach in our interest or credit, yea to forgive injuries, to excuse the mistakes, connive at the neglects, and bear with the hasty passions of our neighbor, to embrace readily any seasonable overture, and accept any tolerable conditions of reconciliation. 9. If we would thus live peaceably, we must not over-highly value ourselves, nor over-eagerly pursue our interests, admire our own endowments, or insist on our deserts; for this will make us apt to depreciate others, and them to loathe us. 10. It also concerns us to abstain from needless contests about matters of opinion, and questions either frivolous and vain, or over-nice and subtle, or that are agitated with eagerness and heat of passion, &c.: this point enlarged on. 11. Moreover, we must restrain pragmatical curiosity within the bounds of our proper business and concerns, not invading other

men's provinces, or without leave and commission intermeddling with their affairs, prying into their designs, and subjecting their proceedings to our censure. 12. Farther, it behoves us not to engage ourselves so deeply in any singular friendship, or in devotion to any one party of men, as to be intirely partial to their interests and prejudiced in their behalf, without distinct consideration of the truth and equity of their pretences in the particular matters of difference, &c. 13. If we would live peaceably ourselves, we should endeavor to preserve peace, prevent differences, and reconcile dissensions among others, by doing good offices and making fair representations between them, by concealing causes of future disgust, removing present misunderstandings, and excusing past mistakes; by allaying their passions, &c.: for the fire that devoures our neighbor's house, threatens and endangers our own; and it is hard to be near contention without engaging therein. Lastly, if we would effectually observe this precept, we must readily comply with the innocent customs, and obey the established laws of the places where we live. There is no preserving of peace, nor preventing of broils, but by punctually observing that ordinary rule of equity, that in cases of doubtful debate and points of controverted practice, the least should yield to the greatest number, the weakest bend to the strongest, and this the best and wisest of men have done, as far as their duty to God and their conscience would permit: instances given. Nor can a compliance with religious customs, used in divine worship, be excepted from this rule: since a willing discrepancy from them greatly destroys peace, and kindles the flame of contention; and it cannot be imagined that the God of love and peace should approve a course so directly contrary to it.

But yet much more is peaceable conversation impeached by disobedience to established laws, those great bulwarks of society, fences of order, and supports of peace; which he who

refuses to obey may reasonably be supposed unwilling to have peace with any man, since he in a manner defies all mankind, vilifies their most solemn judgments, and subverts the only foundation of public tranquillity: this point enlarged on. Conclusion.

SERMON XXIX.

OF A PEACEABLE TEMPER AND CARRIAGE.

ROMANS, CHAP. XII.—VERSE 18.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

THIS chapter containeth many excellent precepts and wholesome advices, (scarce any portion of holy Scripture so many in so little compass.) From among them I have selected one, alas, but too seasonable and pertinent to the unhappy condition of our distracted age, wherein to observe this and such like injunctions, is by many esteemed an impossibility, by others a wonder, by some a crime. It hath an apt coherence with, yet no necessary dependence on, the parts adjoining; whence I may presume to treat on it distinctly by itself: and without farther preface or circumstance we may consider several particulars therein.

I. And, first, concerning the advice itself, or the substance of the duty charged on us, εἰρηνεύειν, ('to be in peace,' or 'live peaceably,') we may take notice, that whether, according to the more usual acception, it be applied to the public estate of things, or, as here, doth relate only to private conversation, it doth import,

1. Not barely a negation of doing or suffering harm, or an abstinence from strife and violence, (for a mere strangeness this may be, a want of occasion, or a truce, rather than a peace,) but a positive amity, and disposition to perform such kind offices,

without which good correspondence among men cannot subsist. For they who by reason of distance of place, non-acquaintance, or defect of opportunity, maintain no intercourse, cannot properly be said to be in peace with one another: but those who have frequent occasion of commerce, whose conditions require interchanges of courtesy and relief, who are some way obliged and disposed to afford needful succor and safe retreat to each other; these may be said to live in peace together, and these only, it being in a manner impossible that they who are not disposed to do good to others (if they have power and opportunity) should long abstain from doing harm.

2. Living peaceably implies not some few transitory performances, proceeding from casual humor or the like; but a constant, stable, and well-settled condition of being; a continual cessation from injury, and promptitude to do good offices. For as one blow doth not make a battle, nor one skirmish a war; so cannot single forbearances from doing mischief, or some few particular acts of kindness, (such as mere strangers may afford each other,) be worthily styled a being in peace: but an habitual inclination to these, a firm and durable estate of innocence and beneficence.

3. Living in peace supposes a reciprocal condition of being; not only a performing good, and forbearing to do bad offices, but a receiving the like treatment from others. For he that being assaulted is constrained to stand on his defence, may not be said to be in peace, though his not being so (involuntarily) is not to be imputed to him.

4. Being in peace imports not only an outward cessation of violence and seeming demonstration of amity, but an inward will and resolution to continue therein. For he that intends, when occasion is presented, to do mischief to another, is nevertheless an enemy, because more secret and dangerous: an ambuscado is no less a piece of war than confronting the enemy in open field. Proclaiming and denouncing signify, but good and ill intention constitute, and are the souls of peace and war. From these considerations we may infer a description of being in peace, viz. that it is, to bear mutual good-will, to continue in amity, to maintain good correspondence, to be on terms of mutual courtesy and benevolence; to be disposed to perform re-

ciprocally all offices of humanity; assistance in need, comfort in sorrow, relief in distress; to please and satisfy one another, by advancing the innocent delight, and promoting the just advantage of each other; to converse with confidence and security, without suspicion, on either hand, of any fraudulent, malicious, or hurtful practices against either: or, negatively, not to be in a state of enmity, personal hatred, pertinacious anger, jealousy, envy, or ill-will; not to be apt to provoke, to reproach, to harm or hinder another, nor to have reasonable grounds of expecting the same bad usage from others; to be removed from danger of vexatious quarrels, intercourse of odious language, offending others, or being disquieted one's self. This I take to be the meaning of living or being in peace, differing only in degree of obligation and latitude of object, from the state of friendship properly so called, and opposed to a condition of enmity, defiance, contention, hatred, suspicion, animosity.

II. In the next place we may consider the object of this duty, signified in those words, 'with all men.' We often meet in Scripture with exhortations directed peculiarly to Christians, to be at peace among themselves; as Mark ix. 5. our Saviour lays this injunction on his disciples, *εἰρηνεύετε ἐν ἀλλήλοις*, 'Have peace one with another;' inculcated by St. Paul on the Thessalonians in the same words: and the like we have in the second Epistle to Timothy, chap. ii. ver. 22. 'Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart:' and to the Romans, (xiv. 19.) 'Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.' But here the duty hath a more large and comprehensive object; *πάντες ἄνθρωποι*, 'all men:' as likewise it hath in the Epistle to the Hebrews, xii. 14. 'Pursue peace with all men:' with all men, without any exception, with men of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians; of all sects and religions; persecuting Jews and idolatrous Heathens; (for of such consisted the generality of men at that time;) and so St. Paul expressly in a like advice, (1 Cor. x. 32. 33. 'Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God; even as I please all men.') And I may add, by evident parity of

reason, with men of all degrees and estates, high and low, noble and base, rich and poor; of all tempers and dispositions, meek and angry, gentle and froward, pliable and perverse; of all endowments, wise and foolish, virtuous and vicious; of all judgments and persuasions, orthodox and heretical, peaceable and schismatical persons: this universally vast and boundless term, 'all men,' contains them all. Neither is there any evading our obligation to this duty, by pretending about others, that they differ from us in humor and complexion of soul, that they entertain opinions irreconcileably contrary to ours; that they adhere to sects and parties which we dislike and disavow; that they are not so virtuous, so religious, so holy as they should be, or at least not in such a manner as we would have them: for be this allegation true or false, it will not excuse us; while they are not divested of human nature, and can truly lay claim to the name and title of men, we are by virtue of this precept obliged to live peaceably with them.

III. We may consider the qualification of the duty here expressed, and what those words mean; 'If it be possible,' 'as much as lieth in you.' To which purpose we may advert, from our description of living peaceably, that it consists mainly of two parts: one active, or proceeding from us, and terminated on others—to bear good-will, to do good offices, to procure the profit, delight, and welfare, to abstain from the displeasure, damage, and disturbance of others: the other passive, issuing from others, and terminated on ourselves—that they be well affected toward us, inclinable to do us good, and nowise disposed to wish, design, or bring any harm, trouble, or vexation on us. Whereof the former is altogether in our power, consisting of acts or omissions depending on our free choice and counsel: and we are directly obliged to it, by virtue of those words, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, 'as much as lieth in you:' the latter is not fully so, yet commonly there be probable means of effecting it, which we are hence bound to use, though sometimes they may fail of success. For the words εἰ δυνατὸν, 'if it be possible,' as they signify the utmost endeavor is to be employed, and that no difficulty (beneath the degree of impossibility) can discharge us from it; so they intimate plainly, that sometime our labor may be lost, and our purpose defeated; and that by the default

of others it may be impossible we should arrive to a peaceable condition of life with all men. However, by this rule we are directed not only ourselves not to infringe the terms of peace toward others, but to endeavor earnestly by all honest and prudent means to obtain the good-will, favor, and respect of others, by which they may be disposed to all friendly correspondence with us, and not to disturb the quiet and tranquillity of our lives.

Having thus by way of explication superficially glanced on the words, we will proceed to a more large and punctual review of them; and shall consider more distinctly the particulars grossly mentioned: and,

I. What those especial duties are, included in this more comprehensive one of living peaceably with all men; both those which are directly required of us, as the necessary causes or immediate results of a peaceable disposition in us toward others; and also those which are to be performed by us, as just and reasonable means conducible to beget or preserve in others a peaceable inclination towards us: these I shall consider promiscuously: and,

1. We are by this precept directly obliged heartily to love, that is, to bear good-will to, to wish well to, to rejoice in the welfare, and commiserate the adversities of all men: at least not to hate, or bear ill-will to, to desire or design the harm, to repine at the happy success, or delight in the misfortunes of any: for as it is very hard to maintain peace and amicable correspondence with those we do not truly love; so it is absolutely impossible to do it long with those we hate: this satanic passion (or disposition of soul) always prompting the mind possessed therewith to the contrivance and execution of mischief; whence he that hates his brother is said to be a murderer, as having in him that bitter root, from whence, if power and occasion conspire, will probably spring that most extreme of outrages, and capital breach of peace. Love is the only sure cement, that knits and combines men in friendly society; and hatred, the certain fountain of that violence, which rends and dissolves it. We cannot easily hurt or strive with those we love and wish well to: we cannot possibly long agree with

those we hate and malign. Peace without love can be esteemed little more than politic dissimulation; and peace with hatred is really nothing less than an artificial disguise, or an insidious covert of enmity.

2. We are hence obliged to perform all kind offices of humanity, which the condition of any man can require, and may by us be performed without considerable inconvenience or detriment to ourselves or others. When, for the preservation or comfortable accommodation of life, they need our help or our advice, we are readily to afford them; when they are in want or distress, we are to minister to them what comfort and relief we can. We are, on this very score, to obey that injunction of St. Paul to the Galatians, 'As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men.' For without this beneficence a man's carriage (though otherwise harmless and inoffensive) appears rather a suspicious strangeness, than a peaceable demeanor, and naturally produces an enmity in those that are concerned in it. For he to whom, being pressed with necessity, requisite assistance is denied, will infallibly be apt to think himself not only neglected and disesteemed, but affronted also and injured; (need, in the general conceit of men, and especially of those that feel it, begetteth a kind of title to some competent relief;) and consequently will heinously resent, and complain bitterly of such supposed wrong, and, if ever he become able, repay it with advantage. And much more are we on the same account not to perform ill offices toward any man; not to disturb him in the enjoyment of his innocent pleasure, nor to hinder him in the advancing his lawful profit, nor to interrupt him in the prosecution of his reasonable designs; nor anywise to vex and grieve him needlessly; and (above all) not to detain him in, nor to aggravate his affliction. For these are actual violations of peace, and impediments of good correspondence among men. Farther,

3. In this duty of living peaceably is included an obligation to all kind of just and honest dealing with all men; punctually to observe contracts, impartially to decide controversies, equally to distribute rewards, to injure no man either in his estate, by violent or fraudulent encroachments on his just possessions; or

in his reputation, by raising or dispersing slanderous reports concerning him: for these courses of all others are most destructive to peace, and on the pretence of them most quarrels that ever were have been commenced.

Justice in its own nature is, and by the common agreement of men hath been designed the guardian of peace and sovereign remedy of contention. But not to insist long on such obvious subjects,

4. It much conduceth to the preservation of peace, and upholding amicable correspondence in our dealings and transactions with men, liable to doubt and debate, not to insist on nice and rigorous points of right, not to take all advantage offered us, not to deal hard measure, not to use extremities, to the damage or hinderance of others, especially when no comparable benefit will thence accrue to ourselves. For such proceedings, as they discover in us little kindness to, or tenderness of our neighbor's good, so they exceedingly exasperate them, and persuade them we are their enemies, and render them ours, and so utterly destroy peace between us. Whenas abating something from the height and strictness of our pretences, and a favorable recession in such cases will greatly engage men to have an honorable opinion and a peaceable affection toward us.

5. If we would attain to this peaceable estate of life, we must use toward all men such demonstrations of respect and courtesy, which according to their degree and station custom doth intitle them to, or which on the common score of humanity they may be reasonably deemed to expect from us; respective gestures, civil salutations, free access, affable demeanor, cheerful looks, and courteous discourse. These, as they betoken good-will in them that use them, so they beget, cherish, and increase it in those, whom they refer to: and the necessary fruit of mutual good-will is peace. But the contrary carriages, contemptuous or disregardful behavior, difficulty of admission to converse, a tetrical or sullen aspect, rough and fastidious language, as they discover a mind averse from friendly commerce, so they beget a more potent disdain in others: men generally (especially those of generous and hearty temper) valuing their due respect beyond all other interests, and more

contentedly brooking injury than neglect. Whence this skill and dexterity of deportment (though immediately, and in its own nature, of no great worth, and regulating actions of small importance, gestures, looks, and forms of speech,) yet because it is a nurse of peace, and greatly contributes to the delightfulness of society, hath been always much commended, and hath obtained a conspicuous place in the honorable rank of virtues, under the titles of courtesy, comity, and affability; and the opposites thereto, rudeness and rusticity, have been deservedly counted and called vices in morality.

6. This precept directly prohibits the use of all reproachful, scornful, and provoking language; these being the immediate results of enmity, and actual breaches of peace. Whence St. Paul conjoins, μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, and ἀμάχους εἶναι, 'To speak evil of no man, to be no quarrellers, (or fighters) but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.' For war is managed (and that with more deadly animosity) with the tongue, as well as with the hand. ('There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword,' saith Solomon; and 'whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,' saith David.) Words are with more anguish felt than blows; their wounds are more incurable, and they leave a deeper scar. Men usually dread more the loss of their honor than their lives, and take more grievously the ravishing of their credit than the depredation of their estate. Living peaceably therefore implies as much abstaining from opprobrious words as injurious actions; yea more; for reviling is not only a violation of peace, but a dishonorable waging of war; like shooting arrows dipt in poison, and discharging slugs against our neighbor's reputation: practices condemned by all as base and inhuman, and contrary to the laws of a noble warfare; being arguments, we affect rather our adversary's utter ruin, than a gallant victory over him. There be fair ways of disputing our cause, without contumelious reflexions on persons; and the errors of men may be sufficiently refuted without satirical virulency. One good reason modestly propounded hath in it naturally more power and efficacy to convince him that is in a mistake, or to confound him with shame that is guilty of a fault, than ten thousand

scoffs and ignominious taunts. When we are to express those deeds of nature, (the performance of which is concealed, as containing in it something of supposed turpitude,) we are wont to veil them in such modest circumlocutions, that by the hearers without offence to their bashfulness may sufficiently be understood. So when it is needful or expedient to confute the opinions, or reprove the actions of men, if we either charitably design their amendment, or desire to maintain peaceable correspondence with them, it behoves that we do not by using the most broad and distasteful language immoderately trespass on their modesty and patience; that (to use Seneca's phrase) we do *agere curam non tantum salutis, sed et honestæ cicatricis.* De Clem. lib. i. c. 17. 'Have a care not only to cure the wound, but to leave a comely scar,' and not to deform him whom we endeavor to reform; for no sore is the easilier cured for being roughly handled, and least of all those in manners and opinion. A soft hand, and a tender heart, and a gentle tongue, are most convenient qualities of a spiritual chirurgeon. But farther to this purpose.

7. If we desire to live peaceably with all men, we are to be equal in censuring men's actions, candid in interpreting their meanings, mild in reprehending, and sparing to relate their miscarriages, to derive their actions from the best principles, (from which in the judgment of charity they may be supposed to proceed, as from casual mistake rather than from wilful prejudice, from human infirmity rather than from malicious design,) to construe ambiguous expressions to the most favorable sense they may admit; not to condemn men's practices without distinct knowlege of the case, and examining the reasons which possibly may absolve or excuse them: to extenuate their acknowleged faults by such circumstances as aptly serve that purpose, and not to exaggerate them by strained consequences, or uncertain conjectures: to rebuke them (if need be) so as they may perceive we sincerely pity their errors, and tender their good, and wish nothing more than their recovery, and do not design to upbraid, deride, or insult over them, being fallen; and finally, not to recount their misdeeds over-frequently, unseasonably, and with complacence. He that thus demeaneth himself manifestly showeth himself to prize his neighbor's good-

will, and to be desirous to continue in amity with him; and assuredly obliges him to be in the same manner affected toward him. But he that is rigidly severe and censorious in his judgments, blaming in them things indifferent, condemning actions allowable, detracting from qualities commendable, deducing men's doings from the worst causes, and imputing them to the worst ends, and representing them under the most odious appellations; that calls all impositions of superiors which he dislikes, tyranny, and all manners of divine worship that suit not to his fancy, superstition, and all pretences to conscience in those that dissent from him, hypocrisy, and all opinions different from his, heresy; that is suspicious of ill intention without sufficient ground, and prejudicates men's meanings before he well apprehends them, and captiously perverts sayings capable of good construction; that is curiously inquisitive into his neighbor's life, and gladly observes failings therein, and on all occasions recites stories to his disgrace and disadvantage; that is immoderately bitter, fierce, and vehement in accusing and inveighing against others, painting such, as he assumes to impugn, with the blackest colors, in the most horrid shape and ugly dress, converting all matter of discourse (though never so unseasonably and impertinently) into declamation, and therein copiously expatiating: in fine, employing his utmost might of wit and eloquence and confidence in rendering that to others as hateful as he signifies they are to himself: such men, what do they else but loudly proclaim that they despise their neighbor's good-will, purposely provoke his anger, and defy his utmost enmity? For it is impossible such dealing should not by them, who are therein concerned, be accounted extremely unjust, and to proceed from desperate hatred.

8. He that would effectually observe this apostolic rule, must be disposed to overlook such lesser faults committed against him, as make no great breach on his interest or credit, yea to forget or forgive the greatest and most grievous injuries; to excuse the mistakes, and connive at the neglects, and bear patiently the hasty passions of his neighbor, and to embrace readily any seasonable overture, and accept any tolerable conditions of reconcilement. For even in common life that observation of our Saviour most exactly holds, 'It is impossible

that offences should not come;' the air may sooner become wholly fixed, and the sea continue in a perfect rest, without waves or undulations, than human conversation be altogether free from occasions of distaste, which he that cannot either prudently dissemble, or patiently digest, must renounce all hopes of living peaceably here. He that like tinder is inflammable by the least spark, and is enraged by every angry word, and resents deeply every petty affront, and cannot endure the memory of a past unkindness should on any terms be defaced, resolves surely to live in eternal tumult and combustion, to multiply daily on himself fresh quarrels, and to perpetuate all enmity already begun. Whenas by total passing by those little causes of disgust the present contention is altogether avoided, or instantly appeased, our neighbor's passion suddenly evaporates and consumes itself; no remarkable footsteps of dissension remain; our neighbor, reflecting on what is past, sees himself obliged by our discreet forbearance, however all possible means are used to prevent trouble and preserve peace. To this purpose, 'The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression,' saith Solomon: and, 'He that covereth a transgression seeketh love,' saith the same wise prince. But farther,

9. If we would live peaceably with all men, we must not over highly value ourselves, nor over eagerly pursue our own things. We must not admire our own endowments, nor insist on our deserts; for this will make us apt to depreciate others, and them to loath us. We must not be over tender of our credit, and covetous of respect; for this will render us apt to take exceptions, and engage us in troublesome competitions for superiority of place, and pre-eminence in the vain opinions of men. 'He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife:' and, 'Only (that is, chiefly) from pride cometh contention,' saith Solomon. We must not be much addicted to our own interests, for this will dispose us to incroach on the concernments of others, and them to resist our attempts, whence conflict and enmity will necessarily arise. We must not prefer our own judgments, and imperiously obtrude them on others; nor be pertinacious in persuading them to embrace our private opinions, nor violently urgent to a compliance with our humor.

For these things are intolerably fastidious in conversation, and obnoxious to be charged with usurpation and iniquity; all men naturally challenging to themselves an equal, or at least a proportionable share of reason, together with the free conduct of their lives uncontrollable by private dictates. If therefore we desire to live quietly, and not needlessly to disoblige or displease others, we should be modest in esteeming our own abilities, and moderate in pursuing our own advantages, and in our converse not less complacent to others than we desire they should be to us; and as liberal in allowing leave to dissent from us, as we are bold in taking freedom to abound in our own sense. And if in debate a modest declaration of our opinion, and the reasons inducing us thereto, will not prevail, it behoves us to give over such a successless combat, and to retire into the silent enjoyment of our own thoughts. From not observing which rule, discourse grows into contention, and contention improves into feud and enmity.

10. If we would live peaceably, it concerns us to abstain from needless contests about matters of opinion, and questions either merely vain and frivolous, of little use or concernment; or over nice and subtile, and thence indeterminable by reason; or that are agitated with extraordinary eagerness and heat of passion; or such as are already defined by general consent; or such on the decision of which the public peace and safety do depend. There are some controversies prickly, like brambles, and apt to scratch those that handle them, but yielding no savory or wholesome fruit: such as concern the consequences of imaginary suppositions, the state and circumstances of beings to us unknown, the right application of artificial terms, and the like impertinent matters; which serve to no other purpose but the exercise of curious wits, and exciting emulation among them. Others there be concerning matters of more weighty moment, yet having the resolution depending on secrets unsearchable, or the interpretation of ambiguous words and obscure phrases, or on some other uncertain conjectures; and are yet rendered more difficult by being entangled with inextricable folds of subtilty, nice distinctions, and crafty evasions, devised by the parties engaged in them for the maintenance of their causes respectively; whence it hath happened, though with immense care and dili-

gence of both parts they have been long canvassed, that yet they do, and in all probability will for ever remain undecided. So that now to engage in contest about them may be reasonably deemed nothing more than a wilful mispense of our time, labor, and good humor, by vainly reciprocating the saw of endless contention. Other questions there be in themselves of more easy resolution and of considerable importance, which yet by extreme opposition of parties are so clouded and overgrown with insuperable prejudices, that the disputing them is seldom attended with other success than an inflaming ourselves and others with passion. Others are by small and obscure parties managed against the common consent, and against the positive decrees of the most venerable authorities among men, by ventilating which as truth is like to gain little, so peace is sure to suffer much. For as it is nowise a safe or advised course (except in case of necessary defence) to subject received opinions to the hazardous trial of a tumultuary conflict, their credit being better upheld by a stately reservedness than by a popular forwardness of discourse; as buildings stand fastest that are never shaken, and those possessions remain most secure that are never called in question: so, on the other hand, to countenance new and uncouth paradoxes, as it argues too much arrogance and presumption in confronting our single apprehensions against the deliberate sense and suffrage of so many men, yea so many ages of men; and is likely to prove a successless attempt, like swimming against the current, accompanied with much toil and little progress, so it serves no good end, but only foments divisions, and disturbs both our private and the public peace. But most of all we are to be cautelous of meddling with controversies of dangerous consequence, wherein the public weal and quiet are concerned, which bare the roots of sacred authority, and prostitute the mysteries of government to vulgar inspection. Such points ought to be subjects of law, not of syllogism, and the errors in them to be corrected by punishment, rather than confuted by argument: neither can it be thought reasonable that the interest of public peace should depend on the event of private disputation. It concerns us therefore, if we would live peaceably in such disputable matters, reserving all due reverence to the judgments of the most, the best and wisest

persons, to be content in a modest privacy, to enjoy the results of a serious and impartial disquisition, patiently enduring others to dissent from us, and not attempting by needless, fruitless, and endless contentions, to gain others to our persuasions; especially since the truth contended for may not be worth the passion employed on it, and the benefits of the victory not countervail the prejudices sustained in the combat. For goodness and virtue may often consist with ignorance and error, seldom with strife and discord. And this consideration I shall conclude with those exhortations of St. Paul, Tit. iii. 9. 'But foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and law-contests, decline; for they are unprofitable and vain.' And in 2 Ep. to Tim. ii. 23-25. 'But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they gender strifes; and the servant of the Lord (that is, a minister of religion) must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that are contrarily disposed.' And in the same chapter, ver. 14. 'Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, to the subverting of the hearers:' of so pernicious consequence did St. Paul esteem unnecessary wrangling and disputing to be. But farther,

11. If we desire to live peaceably, we must restrain our pragmatical curiosity within the bounds of our proper business and concernment, not [being *curiosi in aliena republ.*] invading other men's provinces, and without leave or commission intermeddling with their affairs;* not rushing into their closets, prying into their concealed designs, or dictating counsel to them without due invitation thereto; not controlling their actions, nor subjecting their proceedings to our censure, without competent authority. For these courses men usually look on as rash intrusions, both injurious and reproachful to them, usurping on that freedom of choice, which all men passionately affect to preserve intire to themselves, and arguing them of weakness and incapacity to manage their own business: neither do men

* According to St. Paul's advice, 1 Thess. iv. 11. 'Strive (or be ambitious) to be quiet, and to mind your own business.' (Φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν, καὶ πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια.)

more naturally drive away flies that buz about their ears, and molest them in their employments, than they with disdain repel such immodest and unseasonable meddlers in their affairs. Let no man suffer, saith St. Peter, 'as a busy-body in other men's matters:' intimating that those who are impertinently inquisitive into other men's matters, make themselves liable to suffer (and that deservedly) for their fond curiosity and bold presumption. And, 'he that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears,' saith Solomon; that is, he catcheth at that which he cannot hold, and vainly aims at that which he cannot effect, and rashly irritates those which will turn on him and bite him. If therefore we would neither molest others, nor be disquieted ourselves, we must be like natural agents, never working aught beyond our proper sphere of activity. But especially, if we desire to live peaceably, we must beware of assuming to ourselves a liberty to censure the designs, decrees, or transactions of public authority, and of saying to our superiors, What doest thou? and much more by querulous murmurings, or clamorous declamations, of bringing envy and odium on them. Few private men are capable of judging aright concerning those things, as being placed beneath in a valley, and wanting a due prospect on the ground and causes of their proceedings, who by reason of their eminent station can see more and farther than they; and therefore are incompetent judges, and unjustly presume to interpose their sentence in such cases. But suppose the actions of superiors notoriously blameable and scandalous, and that by infallible arguments we are persuaded thereof; yet seeing neither the taxing of, nor complaint against them doth in any wise regularly belong to us, nor the discovery of our mind therein can probably be an efficacious means of procuring redress, and immediately tends to diminish the reputation and weaken the affection due to government, and consequently to impair the peaceable estate of things which by them is sustained, we are wholly to abstain from such unwarrantable, unprofitable, and turbulent practices; and with a submiss and discreet silence, passing over the miscarriages of our superiors, to wait patiently on the providence, and implore the assistance of him, who is the only competent Judge of such, and sovereign Disposer of

all things, who hath their hearts in his hands, and fashioneth them as he thinks good. Farther,

12. If we would live peaceably with all men, it behoves us not to engage ourselves so deeply in any singular friendship, or in devotion to any one party of men, as to be intirely partial to their interests, and prejudiced in their behalf, without distinct consideration of the truth and equity of their pretences in the particular matters of difference; not to approve, favor, or applaud that which is bad in some; to dislike, discountenance, or disparage that which is good in others: not, out of excessive kindness to some, to give just cause of distaste to others: not, for the sake of a fortuitous agreement in disposition, opinion, interest, or relation, to violate the duties of justice or humanity. For he that on such terms is a friend to any one man, or party of men, as to be resolved, with an implicit faith, or blind obedience, to maintain whatever he or they shall affirm to be true, and whatever they shall do to be good, doth in a manner undertake enmity against all men beside, and as it may happen, doth oblige himself to contradict plain truth, to deviate from the rules of virtue, and to offend Almighty God himself. This unlimited partiality we owe only to truth and goodness, and to God, (the fountain of them,) in no case to swerve from their dictates and prescriptions. He that followed Tiberius Gracchus in his seditious practices, on the bare account of friendship, and alleges in his excuse, that, if his friend had required it of him, he should as readily have put fire to the Capitol, was much more abominable for his disloyalty to his country, and horrible impiety against God, than commendable for his constant fidelity to his friend. And that soldier which is said to have told Cæsar, (in his first expedition against Rome,) that in obedience to his commands he would not refuse to sheath his sword in the breast of his brother, or in the throat of his aged father, or in the bowels of his pregnant mother, was for his unnatural barbarity rather to be abhorred, than to be esteemed for his loyal affection to his general. And in like manner, he that, to please or gratify the humor of his friend, can be either injurious, or treacherous, or notably discourteous to any man else, is very blameable, and renders himself deservedly odious to all others. Lælius, who

incomparably well both understood and practised the rules of friendship, is by Cicero reported to have made this the first and chief law thereof; *Ut neque rogemus res turpes, nec faciamus rogati:* 'That we neither require of our friends the performance of base and naughty things; nor, being requested of them, perform such ourselves.' And in the heraldry, or comparison of duties, as all others must give place to those of piety, verity, and virtue, so after them the duties of humanity justly challenge the next place of respect, even above those which belong to the highest degree of friendship, (due to our nearest relations, yea to our country itself,) precisely taken, abstracted and distinguished from those of humanity. For the world is in nature the first, the most comprehensive and dearest country of us all; and our general obligations to mankind are more ancient, more fundamental, and more indispensable, than those particular ones superadded to, or superstructed on them. The peace therefore of the world, and the general welfare of men its citizens, ought to be more dear to us, and the means conducing thereto more carefully regarded by us in our actions, than either the love, favor, or satisfaction of any particular persons is to be valued or pursued. And the not observing this rule may reasonably be esteemed to have a great influence on the continuance of those implacable feuds and dissensions, wherewith the world is so miserably torn and shattered. Men's being peremptorily resolved to extol, countenance, or excuse promiscuously all the principles and proceedings of the party to which they have addicted themselves, and to see no error, fault, or abuse in them; but by all means to depress, vilify, and condemn (if not to reproach, calumniate, and persecute) the opinions and practices of others, and not to acknowlege in them any thing considerably good or commendable; whence commonly all apprehend their adversaries extremely unjust and disingenuous towards them, and are alienated from all thoughts (or however discouraged from all hopes) of friendly accommodation and reconcilement. But he that would live peaceably with all men, must be free in his judgment, impartial in his dealing, and ingenuous in his carriage toward all: not *θαυμάζων πρόσωπα*, admiring or wondering at some men, (as if they were impeccable, or infallible,) nor having the truth in respect of persons, abetting in

his friends only what is just and true, and allowing the same in others, but in neither by signal approbation countenancing any thing false or evil; for so demeaning himself, he giveth no man just occasion of displeasure or enmity against him.

13. If we would live peaceably ourselves, we should endeavor to preserve peace, and prevent differences, and reconcile dissensions among others, by doing good offices, and making fair representations of intercurrent passages between them; by concealing causes of future disgust, and removing present misunderstandings, and excusing past mistakes; by allaying their passions, and rightly informing their minds, by friendly intercessions, and pacific advices. For the fire that devoureth our neighbor's house threateneth and endangereth ours; and it is hard to approach contention without being engaged therein. 'Tis not easy to keep ourselves indifferent or neutral; and doing so we shall in likelihood be maligned and persecuted by both the contending parties. 'Blessed are the peace-makers,' saith our Saviour, 'for they shall be called the sons of God;' that is, they shall be highly esteemed and reverenced for this divine quality, wherein they so nearly resemble the God of peace, and his blessed Son the great Mediator. But farther, without respect to other recompense, and from the nature of their employment, such are immediately happy, and in this their virtuous practice rewards itself, that by appeasing others' quarrels, they save themselves from trouble, and enjoy themselves that tranquillity which they procure to others. But those informing sycophants, those internuncios of pestilent tales, and incendiaries of discord, that (from bad nature, or on base design) by the still breath of clandestine whispers, or by the more violent blasts of impudent calumnies, kindle the flames of dissension, or foment them among others; that, by disseminating infamous rumors, and by malicious suggestions, instil jealousies into, and nourish malevolent surmises in the minds of men, 'separating,' as it is in the Proverbs, 'between chief friends,' and widening the distance between others: these, I say, from the seeds of variance they scatter among others, reap in the end mischief and disturbance to themselves; nor can expect to enjoy the benefit of that quiet, which they labor to deprive others of. 'The beginning of strife,' saith Solomon, 'is as when one let-

teth out water:' and he that, to the intent his neighbor's lands should be overflown with a torrent of dissension, doth unloose the dams, and cut the banks of former friendship, may (if he be wise) expect the merciless flood should at length reach himself, and that his own habitation should be at last surrounded therewith. For when men at length begin to be weary, and to repent of their needless quarrels, and the mischievous consequences attending them, and to be inquisitive into the causes and instruments of their vexation, they will certainly find out, detest, and invert the edge of their displeasure on these wretched makebates; and so the poison they mingled for others they themselves drink up; the catastrophe of the tragedy (begun by them) is acted on themselves; they sink down into the pit they made for others, and in the net which they hid is their own foot taken: *Et delator habet quod dedit exitium.*

Lastly, if we would effectually observe this precept, we must readily comply with the innocent customs, and obey the established laws of the places where we live. I say first comply with the customs; which also are in effect inferior laws enacted by the tacit agreement of the generality of men; the non-observation of which is on many accounts very prejudicial to peaceable life. For to those concerned in it, it will always seem to intimate a squeamish niceness, a froward perverseness, an arrogant self-conceitedness, a manifest despising other men's judgments, and a virtual condemning their practices of fault or folly, and consequently a monopolising all goodness, and appropriating all wisdom to himself; qualities intolerably odious to men, and productive of enmity. It incenses the people (hugely susceptive of provocation) with a sense of notable injury done, and contempt cast on it. For the only authority, which the commonalty can lay claim to, consists in prescribing rules of decency in language, habit, gesture, ceremony, and other circumstances of action, declared and ratified by ordinary practice; nonconformity to which is by them adjudged a marvellous irregularity, contumacy, and rebellion against the majesty of the people, and is infallibly revenged and punished by them.

There is no preserving peace, nor preventing broils and stirs,

but by punctually observing that ordinary rule of equity, that in cases of doubtful debate, and points of controverted practice, the fewest should yield to the most, the weakest bend to the strongest, and that to the greatest number should be allowed at least the greatest appearance of reason. To which purpose we may observe that the best and wisest men (not to displease those with whom they conversed, as far as their duty to God, and their conscience would permit) have commonly in their manners of life followed not what in their retired judgment they most approved, but what suited to the customs of their times and places, avoiding a morose singularity, as offensive to others, and productive of disquiet to themselves. You know how Cicero * censured Cato for endeavoring, against the grain and predominant genius of those times, to reduce things to a strict agreement with his private notions: *Ille optime animo utens, et summa fide, nocet interdum reipublicæ. Dicit enim tanquam in Platonis* πολιτείᾳ, *non tanquam in Romuli fæce sententiam.* But a more clear and pertinent instance we have in St. Paul, who thus represents his own practice: 'I have made myself a servant to all: unto the Jews I became as a Jew; to them that are without law, as without law: to the weak became I as weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' St. Paul wisely knew that, by a prudent compliance with men's customs, and condescension to their capacities, he engaged to him, or at least did not alienate from him, their affections; and thereby became more capable of infusing good doctrine into their minds, and promoting their spiritual good. And the same course was generally taken by the primitive Christians, who in all things (not inconsistent with the rules and principles of their religion) did industriously conform their conversation to the usual practices of men; thereby shunning those scandalous imputations of pride and perverseness, which then rendered the Jews so odious to the world, as appears by divers passages in the ancient apologists for Christian religion: particularly Justin Martyr (in his Epistle to Diognetus) hath these words: Χριστιανοὶ γὰρ οὔτε γῇ, οὔτε φωνῇ, οὔτε ἔθεσι διακεκριμένοι τῶν λοιπῶν εἰσὶν ἀνθρώπων· οὔτε γάρ που πόλεις

* Epist. ad Att. lib. ii. Ep. i.

ἰδίας κατοικοῦσιν, οὔτε διαλέκτῳ τινὶ παρηλλαγμένῃ χρῶνται, οὔτε βίον παράσημον ἀσκοῦσιν—κατοικοῦντες δὲ πόλεις Ἑλληνικάς τε καὶ βαρβάρους, ὡς ἕκαστος ἐκληρώθη, ἐν τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις ἔθεσιν ἀκολουθοῦντες, &c. 'The Christians neither in dwelling, language, or customs differ from the rest of men; they neither inhabit towns proper to themselves, nor use any peculiar dialect, nor exercise an uncouth manner of living; but, as by chance it is allotted to them, inhabiting cities belonging both to Greeks and Barbarians, comply with the customs of the country.' And much more hath he there; and much Tertullian likewise in his Apologetic, to the same purpose. Neither do we find in the life of our Saviour, that exact pattern of wisdom and goodness, that in any thing he did affect to differ from the received customs of his time and country, except such as were grounded on vain conceits, extremely prejudicial to piety, or directly repugnant thereto.

And I cannot except from this rule the compliance with religious customs used in the worship and service of God: since a wilful discrepancy from them doth much more destroy peace and kindle the flame of contention, inasmuch as men are apt to apprehend themselves much more slighted and more condemned by a disagreement in those, than in matters of lesser concernment. And it cannot reasonably be imagined that the God of love and peace, who questionless delights to see men converse in peace and amity, and who therefore in general terms enjoins us to pursue the things that make for peace, (whereof certainly in reason and to experience, following indifferent and harmless customs, not expressly repugnant to his law, nor to the dictates of natural reason, is one thing, and not the least,) in our addresses to himself (partly designed and mainly serving more strictly to unite, not to dissociate men in affection) should dislike or disapprove the use of this course so expedient and conducible to peace: especially since he infinitely more regards the substance of the duty, and the devotion of the heart therein, than the manner, or any circumstantial appendages thereof: it is certain however that St. Paul intimates a wilful departure from ordinary practice in such cases, to proceed from a contentious disposition: 'But if any man,' saith he, 'have a mind to be

contentious, (so δοκεῖ φιλόνεικος εἶναι imports,) we have no such custom, nor the churches of God.'

But yet much more is peaceable conversation impeached by disobedience to established laws, those great bulwarks of society, fences of order, and supports of peace: which he that refuses to obey, is so far from living peaceably with all men, that he may reasonably be presumed unwilling to have peace with any man; since in a manner he defies all mankind, vilifies its most solemn judgments, endeavors to dissolve those sacred bands by which its union is contained, and to subvert the only foundations of public tranquillity. He declares himself either to affect an universal tyranny over, or an abhorrency from society with, other men, to be unwilling to live with them on equal terms, or to submit to any fair arbitration, to desire that strifes should be endless, and controversies never decided, who declines the verdict of law, the most solemn issue of deliberate advice, proceeding from the most honorable, most wise, most worthy and select persons, and involving in it the consent of the whole commonwealth. St. Paul, directing that prayers should be made for princes and those in authority, assigns the reason, 'that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty:' and certainly if we are to pray for, we are also obliged to obey them in order to the same end, which to do is absolutely in our power, and more immediately requisite to that purpose. For as no peace can be preserved without the influence of authority; so no authority can subsist without obedience to its sanctions. He that is desirous to enjoy the privileges of this happy estate of peace, must in reason be content to perform the duties enjoined, and bear the common burdens imposed by those who are the protectors of it.

Thus, as plainly as I could, have I described what it is to live peaceably, and what the means are that principally conduce thereto: I should now proceed to consider the object of the duty, and the reasons why it respects all men; as also whence it comes, that sometimes we may fail in our endeavor of attaining this desirable condition: and, lastly, to propound some inducements persuasive of its practice. But I must not farther

encroach on your patience, and shall therefore reserve these things to the next opportunity.

Now the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowlege and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you always. Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXX.

ROMANS, CHAP. XII.—VERSE 18.

IT having been already considered what it is to *live peaceably;* also what are duties included therein, and the means that conduce thereto; it is next considered,

II. What is the object thereof, and why the duty of *living peaceably* extends to all men; that is, why we are bound to bear good-will, and do good offices, and show civil respects to all men; and to endeavor that all men should be reciprocally well-affected towards us: for it might be said, why should I be obliged to love those that hate me, to help them that would hinder me, or strive to please them that scorn and would offend me? Or why should I be bound to maintain amicable correspondence with those who are professed enemies to piety and virtue; or how can any love or communion of good offices take place between persons so contrarily disposed? To this it may be answered, such good offices may, and ought to take place; and that, because the obligation is not grounded on any peculiar respects or special qualifications, but on the indefectible score of common humanity: we owe it, not to the men, but to human nature resident in them. There are various other sorts of love; but the love of benevolence, (which is precedent to these,) and the duties consequent on it, are grounded on the natural constitution, necessary properties, and unalterable condition of humanity, and are on several accounts due to it.

1. On account of universal cognation, agreement, and

similitude of nature. We are but streams issuing from one primitive source, branches sprouting from the same stock; one substance, by the miraculous efficacy of the divine benediction, diffused and multiplied: this point enlarged on.

2. We are indispensably obliged to these duties, because the best of our natural inclinations prompt us to the performance of them; especially those of pity and benignity, which are manifestly discernible in all, but most powerful and vigorous in the best natures; and which questionless by the wise and good author of our being were implanted in us, to direct and excite us in the performance of our duty.

3. We are obliged on account of common equity. We have all implanted in us a natural ambition and a desire of being loved and respected; and are disposed in our need to require assistance and relief: therefore in all reason and equity we should pay to others the same respect, aid, and comfort, which we expect from them.

4. We are obliged on account of common interest, benefit, and advantage; since the welfare and safety, the honor and reputation, the pleasure and quiet of our lives, are concerned in our maintaining a loving correspondence with all men.

5. We are obliged by a tacit compact and fundamental constitution of mankind, in pursuance of those principal designs for which men were incorporated and are still contained in civil society.

6. We are, by observing these rules, to oblige and render others well-affected to us; because the being on such terms with men, conduces to our living, not only delightfully and quietly, but honestly and religiously in the world. How peace and edification, spiritual comfort and temporal quiet, concur and co-operate, is intimated in Acts ix. 31. &c.

7. We are obliged to perform these duties of humanity, because by so doing we become more capable of promoting good-

ness in others, and so fulfilling the highest duties of Christian charity; of successfully advising and admonishing others; of instructing their ignorance, removing their prejudices, reclaiming them from vice, and reconciling them to virtue: this subject enlarged on.

8. We are bound thereto in compliance with, and conformity to the best patterns; God, Christ, the Apostles, and the primitive saints: this point illustrated at large.

Since therefore, on so many accounts, we are obliged to this universal benevolence and charity, no miscarriages in practice, no ill dispositions of soul, no demerits in himself, no discourtesies towards us, ought wholly to alienate our affections from any person, to avert us from doing him good, or incline us to render evil for evil: this point enlarged on.

III. It is briefly considered, whence it comes, that though we do our parts, and perform carefully the duties incumbent on us, we may yet prove unsuccessful in our endeavors to live peaceably, and may be hated, harmed, and disquieted. That it so happens is found by experience and example: instances of Moses and David; of our blessed Saviour himself, and of his faithful Disciples.

This will be found by investigation to proceed chiefly from the exceeding variety, difference, and contrariety of men's dispositions, joined with the morosity, aptness to mistake, envy, or unreasonable perverseness of some; which necessarily render the means of attaining all men's good-will insufficient, and the endeavors unsuccessful: for as men see with such various lights, we can hardly do or say any thing, which, if approved by some, will not be blamed by others: but the fatal rock on which peaceable designs most inevitably split, is the unreasonableness of men's pretences, who will on no terms be friends with us, or allow us their good-will, but on condition of concurring with them in dishonest and unwarrantable practices,

&c. But though peace with men is highly valuable, yet this is nothing in comparison with the favor of God, or the internal satisfaction of conscience: this point enlarged on.

Briefly to induce us to practise this duty of living peaceably, we may consider,

1. *How good and pleasant a thing*, as David saith, *for brethren* (and so we all are by nature) *to live together in unity*: the delight of such intercourse and the absence of distracting cares, passions, and dissensions dilated on.

2. That as nothing is more sweet and delightful, so nothing is more comely and agreeable to human nature than peaceable living, it being, as Solomon observes, *an honor to a man to cease from strife*; and consequently a disgrace to him to continue therein.

3. How that peace with its near allies, its causes and effects, love, meekness, gentleness, and patience, are in sacred writ reputed the genuine fruits of the Holy Spirit, issues of divine grace, and the offspring of heavenly wisdom; producing like themselves a goodly progeny of righteous deeds, &c. To close up all, if we must live peaceably and lovingly with all men, then much more are we obliged so to live with all Christians; to whom by nearer and firmer bonds of holy alliance we are related, by more precious communion of faith endeared, by more peculiar obligation of divine commands engaged. Conclusion.

SERMON XXX.

OF A PEACEABLE TEMPER AND CARRIAGE.

ROMANS, CHAP. XII.—VERSE 18.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

I HAVE very lately considered what it is to 'live peaceably,' and what are the duties included therein; and what means conduce thereto.

II. I proceed now to consider the object thereof, and why the duty of living peaceably extends to 'all men,' that is, why we are bound to bear good-will, and do good offices, and show civil respects to all men; and to endeavor that all men reciprocally be well-affected toward us. For it might with some color of reason be objected, and said, why should I be obliged heartily to love those, that desperately hate me; to treat them kindly, that use me despitefully; to help them, that would hinder me; to relieve them, that would plunge me into utter distress; to comfort them, that delight in my affliction; to be respective to, and tender of, their reputation, who despise, defame, and reproach me; to be indulgent and favorable to them, who are harsh and rigorous in their dealings with me; to spare and pardon them, who with implacable malice persecute me? Why should I seek their friendship, who disdainfully reject mine? why prize their favor, who scorn mine? why strive to please them, who purposely offend me? Or why should I have any regard to men, void of all faith, goodness, or desert? And most of all, why should I be bound to maintain amicable

correspondence with those who are professed enemies to piety and virtue, who oppugn truth, and disturb peace, and countenance vice, error, and faction? How can any love, consent of mind, or communion of good offices, intercede between persons so contrarily disposed? I answer, they may, and ought, and that because the obligation to these ordinary performances is not grounded on any peculiar respects, special qualifications, or singular actions of men, (which are contingent and variable,) but on the indefectible score of common humanity. We owe them (as the philosopher alleged, when he dispensed his alms to an unworthy person) *οὐ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ*· not to the men, but to human nature resident in them. There be indeed divers other sorts of love, in nature and object more restrained, built on narrower foundations, and requiring more extraordinary acts of duty and respect, not competent to all men; as a love of friendship, founded on long acquaintance, suitableness of disposition, and frequent exchanges of mutual kindness; a love of gratitude, due to the reception of valuable benefits; a love of esteem, belonging to persons endued with worth and virtue; a love of relation, resulting from kindred, affinity, neighborhood, and other common engagements. But the love of benevolence, (which is precedent to these, and more deeply rooted in nature, more ancient, more unconfined, and more immutable,) and the duties mentioned consequent on it, are grounded on the natural constitution, necessary properties, and unalterable condition of humanity, and are on several accounts due thereto.

1. On account of universal cognation, agreement, and similitude of nature. For *οἰκεῖον ἅπας ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον*· 'All men naturally are of kin and friends to each other,' saith Aristotle.* *Et fratres etiam vestri sumus jure naturæ matris unius;* 'We are also your brethren in the right of nature, our common mother,' saith Tertullian † of old, in the name of the Christians to the Heathens. We are but several streams issuing from one primitive source; several branches sprouting from the same stock; several stones hewed out of the same quarry: one substance, by miraculous efficacy of the divine

* 8. Eth. cap. 1. † In Apolog.

benediction diffused and multiplied. One element affords us matter, and one fire actuates it, kindled at first by the breath of God. One blood flows in all our veins; one nourishment repairs our decayed bodies, and one common air refreshes our languishing spirits. We are cohabitants of the same earth, and fellow-citizens of the same great commonwealth; *Unam reмp. omnium agnoscimus mundum*, said the fore-mentioned apologist for Christianity. We were all fashioned according to the same original idea, (resembling God our common Father,) all endowed with the same faculties, inclinations, and affections; all conspire in the essential and more notable ingredients of our constitution; and are only distinguished by some accidental, inconsiderable circumstances of age, place, color, stature, fortune, and the like; in which we differ as much from ourselves in successions of time. So that what Aristotle said of a friend is applicable to every man; every man is ἄλλος αὐτὸς, 'another ourself:' and he that hates another, detests his own most lively picture; he that harms another, injures his own nature; he that denies relief to another, starves a member of his own body, and withers a branch of his own tree. 'The merciful man doeth good to his own soul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.' Neither can any personal demerit of vicious habit, erroneous opinion, enormous practice, or signal discourtesy towards us, dissolve these bands: for as no unkindness of a brother can wholly rescind that relation, or disoblige us from the duties annexed thereto; so neither on the faults or injuries of any man can we ground a total dispensation from the offices of humanity, especially if the injuries be not irreparable, nor the faults incurable.

2. We are indispensably obliged to these duties, because the best of our natural inclinations prompt us to the performance of them; especially those of pity and benignity, which are manifestly discernible in all, but most powerful and vigorous in the best natures: and which, questionless, by the most wise and good Author of our beings were implanted therein both as monitors to direct, and as spurs to incite us to the performance of our duty. For the same bowels, that, in our want of necessary sustenance, do by a lively sense of pain inform us thereof, and instigate us to provide against it, do in like manner griev-

ously resent the distresses of another, and thereby admonish us of our duty, and provoke us to relieve them. Even the stories of calamities, that in ages long since past have happened to persons nowise related to us, yea, the fabulous reports of tragical events, do (even against the bent of our wills, and all resistance of reason) melt our hearts with compassion, and draw tears from our eyes; and thereby evidently signify that general sympathy which naturally intercedes between all men, since we can neither see, nor hear of, nor imagine another's grief, without being afflicted ourselves. Antipathies may be natural to wild beasts; but to rational creatures they are wholly unnatural. And on the other side, as nature to eating and drinking, and such acts requisite to the preservation of our life, hath adjoined a sensible pleasure and satisfaction, enticing us to, and encouraging us in the performance of them; so, and doubtless to the same end, hath she made relieving the necessities of others, and doing good offices to them, to be accompanied with a very contentful and delicious relish to the mind of the doer. Epicurus, that great master of pleasure, did himself confess that to bestow benefits was not only more brave, but more pleasant, than to receive them; (Ἐπίκουρος, saith Plutarch, τοῦ εὖ πάσχειν, τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν, οὐ μόνον κάλλιον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡδιον εἶναι φησί.) And certainly no kind of actions a man can perform are attended with a more pure, more perfect, more savory delight, than those of beneficence are. Since nature therefore hath made our neighbor's misery our pain, and his content our pleasure; since with indissoluble bands of mutual sympathy she hath concatenated our fortunes and affections together; since by the discipline of our sense she instructs us, and by the importunity thereof solicits us to the observance of our duty, let us follow her wise directions, and conspire with her kindly motions; let us not stifle or weaken by disuse, or contrary practice, but by conformable action cherish and confirm the good inclinations of nature.

3. We are obliged to these duties on account of common equity. We have all (the most sour and stoical of us all) implanted in us a natural ambition, and a desire (which we can by no means eradicate) of being beloved and respected by all; and are disposed in our need to demand assistance, commise-

ration of our misfortunes, and relief in our distress of all that are in capacity to afford them; and are apt to be vehemently displeased, to think ourselves hardly dealt with, and to complain of cruelty and inhumanity in those that refuse them to us: and therefore in all reason and equity we should readily pay the same love, respect, aid, and comfort to others, which we expect from others; for, *beneficium qui dare nescit, injuste petit;* nothing is more unreasonable, or unequal, than to require from others those good turns which on like occasion we are unwilling to render to others.

4. We are obliged to these duties of humanity, on account of common interest, benefit, and advantage. The welfare and safety, the honor and reputation, the pleasure and quiet of our lives are concerned in our maintaining a loving correspondence with all men. For so uncertain is our condition, so obnoxious are we to manifold necessities, that there is no man whose good-will we may not need, whose good word may not stand us in stead, whose helpful endeavor may not sometime oblige us. The great Pompey, the glorious triumpher over nations, and admired darling of fortune, was beholden at last to a slave for the composing his ashes, and celebrating his funeral obsequies. The honor of the greatest men depends on the estimation of the least; and the good-will of the meanest peasant is a brighter ornament to the fortune, a greater accession to the grandeur of a prince, than the most radiant gem in his royal diadem. However the spite and enmity of one (and him the most weak otherwise and contemptible) person may happen to spoil the content of our whole life, and deprive us of the most comfortable enjoyments thereof; may divert our thoughts from our delightful employments to a solicitous care of self-preservation and defence; may discompose our minds with vexatious passions; may by false reports, odious suggestions, and slanderous defamations blast our credit, raise a storm of general hatred, and conjure up thousands of enemies against us; may by insidious practices supplant and undermine us, prejudice our welfare, endanger our estate, and involve us in a bottomless gulph of trouble: it is but reasonable therefore, if we desire to live securely, comfortably, and quietly, that by all honest means we should endeavor to purchase the good-will of all

men, and provoke no man's enmity needlessly; since any man's love may be useful, and every man's hatred is dangerous.

5. We are obliged to these duties by a tacit compact and fundamental constitution of mankind, in pursuance of those principal designs for which men were incorporated, and are still contained in civil society. For to this purpose do men congregate, cohabit, and combine themselves in sociable communion, that thereby they may enjoy a delightful conversation, void of fear, free from suspicion, and free from danger; promote mutual advantage and satisfaction; be helpful and beneficial each to other: abstracting from which commodities, the retirements of a cloister, or the solitudes of a desert, the life of a recluse, or of a wild beast, would perhaps be more desirable than these of gregarious converse: for as men, being pleased and well-affected to each other, are the most obliging friends and pleasant companions; so being enraged, they are the most mischievous and dangerous neighbors, the most fierce and savage enemies. By neglecting, therefore, or contravening these duties of humanity, we frustrate the main ends of society, disappoint the expectations of each other, subvert the grounds of ordinary civility, and in the commonwealth deal as unpoliticly as the members in the body should act unnaturally, in subtracting mutual assistance, or harming each other; as if the eye should deny to the hands the direction of sight, and the hands in revenge should pluck out the eyes.

6. We are by observing these rules to oblige and render men well-affected to us, because being on such terms with men conduceth to our living (not only delightfully and quietly, but) honestly and religiously in this world. How peace and edification, spiritual comfort and temporal quiet do concur and cooperate, we see intimated Acts ix. 31. 'Then had the churches peace throughout all Judæa, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified: and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.' St. Paul advised the Christians of his time, liable to persecution, 'to make prayers for all men,' (and especially for those in eminent power,) 'that they might lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty;' to pray for them, that is, to pray that they might be so disposed, as not to molest, interrupt, or discourage

them in the exercise of virtue, and practice of piety. For these by a tranquillity of mind, a sedateness of affections, a competency of rest, and leisure, and retirement, a freedom from amazing fear, distracting care, and painful sense, are greatly advanced; of which advantages by contentious broils and enmities we are deprived, and encumbered with the contrary impediments. They breed thorny anxieties, and by them choke the seeds of good intention: they raise dusky fumes of melancholy, by them intercepting the beams of spiritual light, and stifling the flames of devout affection. By them our thoughts are affixed on the basest, and taken off from the most excellent objects; our fancies are disordered by turbulent animosities; our time is spent, and our endeavor taken up in the most ungrateful and unprofitable employments, of defeating the attempts, resisting the assaults, disproving the calumnies, countermining the plots of adversaries; they bring us on the stage against our will, and make us act parts in tragedies, neither becoming nor delighting us. They disturb often our natural rest, and hinder us in the dispatch of our ordinary business; and much more impede the steadiness of our devotion, and obstruct the course of religious practice. They tempt us also to omissions of our duty, to unseemly behavior, and to the commissions of grievous sin; to harsh censure, envious detraction, unwarrantable revenge, repining at the good successes, and delighting in the misfortunes of others. Many examples occur in history, like those of Hanno the Carthaginian, and Quint. Metellus, (Pompey's antagonist,) who, in pursuance of some private grudges, have not only betrayed their own interests, and sullied their own reputations; but notably disserved and damnified the public weal of their country: and so will our being engaged in enmity with men cause us to neglect, if not to contradict, our dearest concernments; whence we should carefully avoid the occasions thereof, and by an innocent and beneficent conversation oblige men to a friendly correspondence with us.

7. We are obliged to perform these duties of humanity, because by so doing we become more capable of promoting goodness in others, and so fulfilling the highest duties of Christian charity; of successfully advising and admonishing others; of instructing their ignorance, and convincing their mistakes; of

removing their prejudices, and satisfying their scruples; of reclaiming them from vice, error, faction; and reconciling them to virtue, truth, and peace. For by no force of reason, or stratagem of wit, are men so easily subdued, by no bait so throughly allured and caught, as by real courtesy, gentleness, and affability; as on the other side, by a sour and peevish humor, supercilious looks, bitter language, and harsh dealing, men are rendered indocile and intractable, averse from better instruction, obstinate in their ways, and pertinacious in their conceits. Easily do men swallow the pill gilded with fair carriage, and sweetened by kind speech; readily do they afford a favorable ear to the advice seeming to proceed from good-will, and a tender care of their good: but the physic of wholesome admonition being steeped in the vinegar of reproach, and tempered with the gall of passion, becomes distasteful and loathsome to the patient: neither will men willingly listen to the reasonings of those whom they apprehend disaffected to their persons, and more desirous to wound their reputations than to cure their distempers. The slightest argument, the most simple and unpolished oration, issuing from the mouth of a friend, is wonderfully more prevalent than the strongest demonstration, than the most powerful eloquence of an enemy. For obliging usage and courteous speech unlock the affections, and by them insinuate into the reason of men: but surly deportment and froward expressions dam up the attention with prejudice, and interclude all avenues to the understanding. An illustration of which discourse we have from comparing the different practice of the Jews, and the ancient Christians, with the contrary successes thereof. The Jews, by their seditious and turbulent practices, by their insolent contempt, and implacable hatred of others; (for you know what Tacitus saith of them:* *Apud ipsos fides obstinata, misericordia in promptu, sed adversus omnes alios hostile odium;*) by their perverse and unsociable humors, declining all intercourse, and refusing ordinary offices of humanity (so much as to show the way, or to direct the thirsty traveller to the fountain) to any not of their own sect, did procure an odium, scorn, and infamy on their religion, rendered all men

* Hist. lib. v.

averse from inquiring into, or entertaining any good opinion thereof, and so very little enlarged its bounds, and gained few proselytes thereto. But the Christians, by a mild, patient, and peaceable behavior; by obedience to laws, and compliance with harmless customs; by perfect innocence, and abstinence from doing injury; by paying due respects, and performing civil offices and demonstrations of benevolence; by loving conversation, and friendly commerce with all, commended their doctrine to the regard of men:* and by this only piece of rhetoric (without terror of arms, or countenance of power, or plausibility of discourse, or promise of temporal reward) subdued the faith of men, and persuaded a great part of the world to embrace their excellent profession.

'We converse with you like men, we use the same diet, habit, and necessary furniture: we have recourse to your tribunals; we frequent your markets, your fairs, your shops, your stalls, your shambles, your baths: we cohabit, we sail, we war, we till, we trade, we maintain all manner of commerce with you;' saith the Christian apologist† to the Pagans, in behalf of the ancient Christians. Which kind of practice they derived not only from the sweet temper and noble genius of their religion, but from the express institution of the first teachers thereof, and from their exemplary practice therein. For both by doctrine did the Apostles exhort, and by their example incite them to adorn the gospel, and render the discipline of Christ amiable by their meek, gentle, compliant, and inoffensive conversation; and thereby to allure others to a willing entertainment thereof. To this purpose are those exhortations, Phil. iv. 5. 'Let your moderation' (τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν, 'your equity,' or 'gentleness') 'be known to all men:' and, 1 Thess. v. 14. 'Comfort the afflicted, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all. Be ye all careful not to render evil for evil, but always pursue goodness toward each other, and toward all:' and, Gal. vi. 10. 'As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men:' and,

* Thus the ancient Christians: but when religion declined, dissension and ill-will did grow; so that the heathen historian (Am. Mar. lib. xxii.) could say of Julian: 'Nullas infestas hominibus bestias, ut sunt sibi ferales plerique Christianorum, expertus.'

† Tertull. Apol.

Tit. iii. 1, 2. 'Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to be ready to every good work, to reproach no man, not to be contentious, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men:' and, 2 Tim. ii. 24. 25. 'The minister of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves;' (or those that are otherwise disposed, τοὺς ἀντιδιατιθεμένους:) 'if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowlegement of the truth:' where gentleness toward all, and meekness toward adversaries, are oppositely conjoined, with aptness to teach and instruct; the one qualification so effectually predisposing to the other: and it is beside intimated that gentle and meek treatment are suitable instruments ordinarily employed by God to convert men from error to truth.

8. We are bound hereto in compliance and conformity to the best patterns; God, Christ, the Apostles, the primitive saints. This illustrious doctor of Christian religion, St. Paul, did not fail to second this his doctrine with his own example; for, 'give none offence,' saith he, 'neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God; even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.' 'Please all men in all things:' what could St. Paul say, or what do more? And again, 'for though,' saith he, 'I be free from all men, yet have I made myself a servant unto all, that I might gain the more. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that by all means I might save some.' See how far this charitable design of doing good to others transported him: he parted with his own freedom, that he might redeem them from the slavery of a wicked life; he denied his own present satisfaction, that he might procure them a lasting content; he despised his own profit, that he might promote their spiritual advantage; he prostituted his own reputation, that he might advance them to a condition of true glory. He underwent grievous afflictions for their comfort, sustained restless pains for their ease, and hazarded his own safety for their salvation. He condescended to their infirmities, suited his demeanor to their tempers, complied with their

various humors and contrary customs: he differed from himself, that he might agree with them, and transformed himself into all shapes, that he might convert them into what they should be, reform their manners, and translate them into a happy estate. But above all is the practice of our Lord himself most remarkable to this purpose; and discovers plainly to him that observes an universally large and unrestrained philanthropy. For having from a wonderful conspiracy of kindness and good-will (between him and his eternal Father) toward the world of men, descended willingly from the throne of his celestial majesty, and enveloped his divine glory in a cloud of mortal frailty, and that, as the Apostle saith, 'he might reconcile all things in heaven and earth,' conjoin God and man by a nearer alliance, and unite men together by the more sacred bands of common relation to himself: having assumed not only the outward shape and corporeal resemblance of man, but the inward frame, and real passions of human souls; he disdained not accordingly to obey the laws, to follow the inclinations, to observe the duties of the best and most perfect humanity; with an equal and impartial bounty imparting free admittance, familiar converse, friendly aid and succor unto all, even the worst of men in all appearance, (and that so far, that some rigorous censurers thence presumed to tax him as 'a glutton, and a good fellow, a friend to publicans and sinners,') distributing liberally to all the incomparable benefits of his heavenly doctrine, of his holy example, of his miraculous power; instructing the ignorances, detecting the errors, dispossessing the devils; sustaining the weaknesses, overlooking the injuries, comforting the afflictions, supplying the necessities, healing the diseases, and remedying all the miseries of all, that did not wilfully reject their own welfare: 'he went about,' saith St. Peter in the Acts, 'doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil:' and, 'he went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people,' saith St. Matthew's gospel. He despised not the meanest, either in outward estate or spiritual improvement. He invited all unto him, repelled or discouraged none; nor refused to any that came unto him his

counsel or his help. He was averse from no man's society, (and if in any degree from any, chiefly from those who confidently pretended to extraordinary sanctity, and proudly contemned others.) Meek and gentle he was, mild and patient; courteous and benign; lowly and condescensive; tender and compassionate in his conversation unto all. And for a complement of his transcendent charity, and for an enforcement unto ours, he laid down his life for us all, as a common price to purchase remission of sins; a general ransom to redeem the human creation from the captivity of hell and slavery of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; demolishing by his pacific death all partition-walls, and laying open all inclosures of the divine favor; reconciling God to man, and combining man to himself by the fresh cement of his precious blood: so that now not only as fellow creatures, but (which is exceedingly more) as partakers of the same common redemption, as objects of the same mercy, as obliged in the same common debt, and as capable of the same eternal happiness, by new and firmer engagements we are bound to all mutual kindness and benevolence toward all. For, 'destroy not,' saith St. Paul, (and by like reason I may say, harm not, vex not, be not unkind to) 'him, for whom Christ died.'

Nay, farther, we have the example of Almighty God himself directing, and by our Saviour's express admonition obliging us to this universal beneficence, compassion, and patience towards all: who by express testimony of sacred writ, and by palpable signs of continual experience, declareth himself to be a lover of mankind; to be good to all, and tenderly merciful over all his works; not to afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; to compassionate the miseries, and supply the needs, and relieve the distresses, to desire the salvation, and to delight in the happiness of men: who with an indifferent, unlimited munificence dispenses his blessings, extends his watchful providence, and imparts his loving care unto all; causing his sun with comfortable beams to shine, and the refreshing showers to descend, the earth to yield her pleasant fruits, the temperate seasons to recur, and all the elements to minister succor, joy, and satisfaction even to the most impious and ungrateful toward him: who with immense clemency and long-

sufferance overlooks the sacrilegious affronts offered daily to his majesty, the outrageous violations of his laws, and the contemptuous neglects of his unexpressible goodness: who patiently waits for the repentance, and incessantly solicits the reconcilement, courts the amity, and in a manner begs the good-will of his most deadly enemies; whom he hath always in his hand, and can crush to nothing at his pleasure. For, 'we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God by us did intreat you: we beseech you in Christ's behalf; be reconciled to God,' saith St. Paul.

Since therefore on account of natural consanguinity, of our best inclinations, of common equity, and general advantage, and an implicit compact between men; of securing our, and promoting others' virtue and piety; from the exhortations of Scripture mentioned, and many more tending to the same purpose; from the example of the ancient Christians, the leaders and champions of our religion, of the Apostles, the masters and patriarchs thereof, of our blessed Redeemer, and of Almighty God himself, we are obliged to this universal benevolence and beneficence toward all; no misapprehensions of judgment, no miscarriages in practice, no ill dispositions of soul, no demerits in himself, no discourtesies toward us, ought wholly to alienate our affections from, or to avert us from doing good, or to incline us to render evil for evil unto any person: especially considering that the omissions of others cannot excuse us from the performance of our duty; that no man is to be presumed incorrigible, nor (like the lapsed angels) concluded in desperate impenitence; and that our loving and gentle demeanor toward them may be instrumental to their amendment, and the contrary may contribute to their progress and continuance in offences; that God hath promised to us a reward of our patience, and hath reserved to them a season of judgment and punishment, if they persist obstinate in their disorderly courses; that to avenge their trespasses belongs not to us, but to Almighty God, who is more nearly concerned in, and more injured by them, and is yet content to endure them, to prolong their lives, to continue his benefits to them, and to expect their conversion: that our differing from them is not to be attributed to ourselves, but wholly, or chiefly, to the goodness of God;

that we always were, are, and shall be liable to the same errors, vices, and misdemeanors: that, lastly, the faults and follies of others, like the maims of body, distempers of soul, or crosses of fortune, (being their own greatest unhappinesses,) require rather our pity than our hatred, to be eased by our help than aggravated by our unkindness. 'Tis too scant therefore and narrow a charity that is limited by correspondence of courtesy, or by the personal merits of others. We are bound to live peaceably with, that is, to be innocent, beneficial, respective to all, and to seek the reciprocal good-will, love, and amity of all. But I have insisted too long on this particular, concerning the object of this duty, and its extension.

III. I proceed briefly to consider whence it comes, that, (as I before observed was intimated in these words, 'If it be possible, as much as lieth in you,') though we do our parts, and perform carefully the duties incumbent on us, though we bear good-will, and do good offices, and yield due respects, and abstain from all not only injurious, but rigorous dealings toward all; though we revile none, nor censure harshly, nor presumptuously intermeddle with others' affairs; though we obey laws, and comply with received customs, and avoid all occasions of contention; though our tempers be meek, our principles peaceable, and our conversations inoffensive, we may yet prove successless in our endeavors to live peaceably, and may be hated, harmed, and disquieted in our course of life. That it so happens, we find by plain experience and manifold example. For Moses, the meekest man on earth, and commended beside by all circumstances of divine favor and human worth, was yet often envied, impugned, and molested by those, whom by all manner of benefits he had most highly obliged. And we find David frequently complaining that by those, whose good-will, by performing all offices of friendly kindness and brotherly affection, he had studiously labored to deserve, whose maladies and calamities he had not only tenderly commiserated, but had prayed and humbled his soul with fasting for their recovery and deliverance from them, was yet recompensed by their treacherous devices against his safety, by grievous reproaches, and scornful insultings over him in his affliction; as we see at large in Psalms xxxv. and lxix. And in Psalm cxx. he thus la-

mentably bemoans his condition: 'Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar: My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace: I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.' And our blessed Saviour himself, though in the whole tenor of his life he demonstrated an incomparable meekness and sweetness of disposition, and exercised continually all manner of kindness and beneficence toward all men, was notwithstanding loaded with all kinds of injuries and contumelies, was bitterly hated, ignominiously disgraced, and maliciously persecuted unto death. And the same lot befel his faithful disciples, that although their design was benign and charitable, their carriage blameless and obliging toward all, they were yet pursued constantly both by the outrageous clamors of the people, and cruel usages from those in eminent power. Now though it seem strange and almost incredible that they who are truly friends to all, and are ready to do to all what good they can; who willingly displease none, but industriously strive to acquire (not with glozing shows of popularity, but by real expressions of kindness) the good-will and favor of all, should yet be maligned or molested by any; yet seeing it so happens, if we inquire into the reason, we shall find this miracle in morality to proceed (to omit the neglect of the duties mentioned in our former discourse) chiefly from the exceeding variety, difference, and contrariety of men's dispositions, joined with the morosity, aptness to mistake, envy, or unreasonable perverseness of some; which necessarily render the means of attaining all men's good-will insufficient, and the endeavors unsuccessful. For men seeing by several lights, relishing with diversely disposed palates, and measuring things by different standards, we can hardly do or say any thing, which, if approved and applauded by some, will not be disliked and blamed by others; if it advance us in the opinion of some, will not as much depress us in the judgment of others; so that in this irreconcilable diversity and inconsistency of men's apprehensions, it is impossible not to displease many; especially since some men either by their natural temper, or from the influence of some sour principles they have imbibed, are so morose, rigid, and self-willed; so impatient of all contradiction to, or discrepancy from their sentiments, that they

cannot endure any to dissent in judgment, or vary in practice from them, without incurring their heavy disdain and censure. And, which makes the matter more desperate and remediless, such men commonly being least able either to manage their reason or to command their passion, as guided wholly by certain blind impulses of fancy, or groundless prejudices of conceit, or by a partial admiration of some men's persons, examples, and authorities, are usually most resolute and peremptory in their courses, and thence hardly capable of any change, mitigation, or amendment. Of which sort there being divers engaged in several ways, it is impossible to please some without disgusting the other; and difficult altogether to approach any of these wasps without being stung or vexed by them. Some also are so apt to misunderstand men's meanings, to misconstrue their words, and to make ill descants on, or draw bad consequences from their actions, that it is not possible to prevent their entertaining ill-favored prejudices against even those that are heartily their friends, and wish them the best. To others the good and prosperous estate of their neighbor, that he florishes in wealth, power, or reputation, is ground sufficient of hatred and enmity against him; for so we see that Cain hated his innocent brother Abel, because his brother's works were more righteous, and his sacrifices better accepted, than his own; that Joseph's brethren were mortally offended at him, because his father especially loved and delighted in him; that Saul was enraged against David, because his gallant deeds were celebrated with due praises and joyful acclamations of the people; and that the Babylonian princes on no other score maligned Daniel, but because he enjoyed the favor of the king, and a dignity answerable to his deserts. And who that loves his own welfare, can possibly avoid such enmities as these? But the fatal rock, on which peaceable designs are most inevitably split, and which by no prudent steering our course can sometimes be evaded, is the unreasonable perverseness of men's pretences, who sometimes will on no terms be friends with us, or allow us their good-will, but on condition of concurring with them in dishonest and unwarrantable practices; of omitting some duties, to which by the express command of God, or evident dictates of right reason, we are obliged, or

performing some action repugnant to those indispensable rules. But though peace with men is highly valuable, and possessing their good-will in worth not inferior to any other indifferent accommodation of life, yet are these nothing comparable to the favor of God, or the internal satisfaction of conscience; nor, though we were assured thereby to gain the intire love and favor of all men living, are we to purchase them at so dear a rate, as with the loss of these. We must not, to please or gratify men, commit any thing prohibited, or omit any thing enjoined by God, the least glimpse of whose favorable aspect is infinitely more to be prized than the most intimate friendship of the mightiest monarchs on earth; and the least spark of whose indignation is more to be dreaded, than the extremest displeasure of the whole world. In case of such competition, we must resolve with St. Paul, 'Do I yet conciliate God, or do I endeavor to soothe men? For if I yet soothed (or flattered) men, (so you know ἀρέσκειν signifies,) I were not the servant of Christ.' Nor are we, that we may satisfy any man's pleasure, to contravene the dictates of reason, (that subordinate guide of our actions,) to do any dishonorable or uncomely action, unworthy of a man, misbeseeming our education, or incongruous to our station in human society, so as to make ourselves worthily despicable to the most by contenting some: nor are we bound always to desert our own considerable interest, or betray our just liberty, that we may avoid the enmity of such as would violently or fraudulently encroach on them. Nor are we in the administration of justice, distribution of rewards, or arbitration of controversies, to respect the particular favor of any, but the merits only of the cause, or the worth of the persons concerned. Nor are we by feeding men's distempered humors, or gratifying their abused fancies, to prejudice or neglect their real good; to encourage them in bad practices, to foment their irregular passions, to applaud their unjust or uncharitable censures, or to puff up their minds with vain conceit by servile flattery: but rather, like faithful physicians, to administer wholesome though unsavory advice: to reveal to them their mistakes, to check their intended progress in bad courses, to reprove their faults seasonably, and when it may probably do them good, though possibly thereby

we may provoke their anger and procure their ill-will, and, as St. Paul saith, become their enemies, for telling them the truth. Nor are we ever explicitly to assent to falsehoods, (so apprehended by us,) to belie our consciences, or contradict our real judgments; (though we may sometimes for peace sake prudently conceal them;) nor to deny the truth our defence and patronage, when in order to some good purpose it needs and requires them, though thereby we may incur the dislike, and forfeit the good-will of some men. Nor are we by entertaining any extraordinary friendship, intimate familiarity, or frequent converse with persons notoriously dissolute in their manners, disorderly in their behavior, or erroneous in weighty points of opinion, to countenance their misdemeanors, dishonor our profession, render ourselves justly suspected, run the hazard of contagion, or hinder their reformation. And especially we are warily to decline the particular acquaintance of men of contentious dispositions, mischievous principles, and factious designs; a bare keeping company with whom looks like a conspiracy, an approving or abetting their proceedings; the refusing any encouragement, signification of esteem, or vouchsafing any peculiar respect to such, we owe to the honor of virtue, which they disgrace, to the love of truth, which they oppugn, to the peace of the world, which they disturb, and to the general good of mankind, which they impeach. And so St. Paul warns us not to mingle or consort, not to diet or common (*μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι*, and *μὴ συνεσθίειν*) with men of a dissolute and disorderly conversation: and, 'to mark them which cause seditions, and scandals, contrary to Christian doctrine, and to shun or decline them,' (*ἐκκλίνειν ἀπ' αὐτῶν*,) and to repudiate, deprecate the familiarity of heretics (*αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον παραιτεῖσθαι*). And St. John forbids us to wish joy, or to allow the ordinary respects of civil salutation to apostates and impostors; lest (by such demonstration of favor) 'we communicate with them in their wicked works.' None of which precepts are intended to interdict to us, or to disoblige us from bearing real good-will, or dispensing needful benefits to any, but to deter us from yielding any signal countenance to vice and impiety; and to excite us to declare such dislike and detestation of those heinous enormities, as may confer to the

reclaiming of these, and prevent the seduction of others. So St. Paul expressly, 'But if any man obeyeth not our injunction by epistle, do not consort with him, that he may by shame be reclaimed' (ἵνα ἐντραπῇ): and, 'Account him not an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.' Nor ought, lastly, the love of peace, and desire of friendly correspondence with any men, avert us from an honest zeal (proportionable to our abilities and opportunities) of promoting the concernments of truth and goodness, though against powerful and dangerous opposition; I say an honest zeal, meaning thereby not that blind, heady passion, or inflammation of spirit, transporting men beyond the bounds of reason and discretion, on some superficially plausible pretences, to violent and irregular practices; but a considerate and steady resolution of mind, effectually animating a man by warrantable and decent means vigorously to prosecute commendable designs; like that St. Jude mentions, of 'striving earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.' For this zeal may be very consistent with, yea, greatly conducible to, the designs of peace. And 'tis not a drowsiness, a slack remissness, a heartless diffidence, or a cowardly flinching from the face of danger and opposition, we discourse about or plead for; but a wise and wary declining the occasions of needless and unprofitable disturbance to ourselves and others.

To conclude this point, (which, if time would have permitted, I should have handled more fully and distinctly,) though to preserve peace, and purchase the good-will of men, we may and ought to quit much of our private interest and satisfaction, yet ought we not to sacrifice to them what is not our own, nor committed absolutely to our disposal, and which in value incomparably transcends them, the maintenance of truth, the advancement of justice, the practice of virtue, the quiet of our conscience, the favor of Almighty God. And if, for being dutiful to God, and faithful to ourselves in these particulars, any men will hate, vex, and despite us; frustrate our desires, and defeat our purposes of living peaceably with all men in this world; we may comfort ourselves in the enjoyment of eternal peace and satisfaction of mind, in the assurance of the divine favor, in the hopes of eternal rest and tranquillity in the world to come.

Now briefly to induce us to the practice of this duty of living peaceably, we may consider,

1. 'How good and pleasant a thing it is,' as David saith, 'for brethren (and so we are all at least by nature) to live together in unity.' How that, as Solomon saith, 'Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.' How delicious that conversation is, which is accompanied with a mutual confidence, freedom, courtesy, and complacence: how calm the mind, how composed the affections, how serene the countenance, how melodious the voice, how sweet the sleep, how contentful the whole life is of him, that neither deviseth mischief against others, nor suspects any to be contrived against himself; and contrariwise, how ingrateful and loathsome a thing it is to abide in a state of enmity, wrath, dissension; having the thoughts distracted with solicitous care, anxious suspicion, envious regret; the heart boiling with choler, the face overclouded with discontent, the tongue jarring and out of tune, the ears filled with discordant noises of contradiction, clamor, and reproach; the whole frame of body and soul distempered and disturbed with the worst of passions. How much more comfortable it is to walk in smooth and even paths, than to wander in rugged ways overgrown with briars, obstructed with rubs, and beset with snares; to sail steadily in a quiet, than to be tossed in a tempestuous sea; to behold the lovely face of heaven smiling with a cheerful serenity, than to see it frowning with clouds, or raging with storms; to hear harmonious consents, than dissonant ranglings; to see objects correspondent in graceful symmetry, than lying disorderly in confused heaps; to be in health, and have the natural humors consent in moderate temper, than (as it happens in diseases) agitated with tumultuous commotions: how all senses and faculties of man unanimously rejoice in those emblems of peace, order, harmony, and proportion; yea, how nature universally delights in a quiet stability, or undisturbed progress of motion; the beauty, strength, and vigor of every thing requires a concurrence of force, co-operation, and contribution of help; all things thrive and flourish by communicating reciprocal aid, and the world subsists by a friendly conspiracy of its parts; and especially that political society of men

chiefly aims at peace as its end, depends on it as its cause, relies on it as its support. How much a peaceful state resembles heaven, into which neither complaint, pain, nor clamor (*οὔτε πένθος, οὔτε πόνος, οὔτε κραυγή*), as it is in the Apocalypse) do ever enter; but blessed souls converse together in perfect love, and in perpetual concord: and how a condition of enmity represents the state of hell, that black and dismal region of dark hatred, fiery wrath, and horrible tumult. How like a paradise the world would be, flourishing in joy and rest, if men would cheerfully conspire in affection, and helpfully contribute to each other's content: and how like a savage wilderness now it is, when, like wild beasts, they vex and persecute, worry and devour each other. How not only philosophy hath placed the supreme pitch of happiness in a calmness of mind, and tranquillity of life, void of care and trouble, of irregular passions and perturbations; but that holy Scripture itself in that one term of peace most usually comprehends all joy and content, all felicity and prosperity: so that the heavenly consort of angels, when they agree most highly to bless, and to wish the greatest happiness to mankind, could not better express their sense, than by saying, 'Be on earth peace, and good will among men.'

2. That as nothing is more sweet and delightful, so nothing more comely and agreeable to human nature than peaceable living, it being, as Solomon saith, 'an honor to a man to cease from strife;' and consequently also a disgrace to him to continue therein: that rage and fury may be the excellences of beasts, and the exerting their natural animosity in strife and combat may become them; but reason and discretion are the singular eminences of men, and the use of these the most natural and commendable method of deciding controversies among them: and that it extremely misbecomes them that are endowed with those excellent faculties so to abuse them, as not to apprehend each other's meanings, but to ground vexatious quarrels on the mistake of them; not to be able by reasonable expedients to compound differences, but with mutual damage and inconvenience to prorogue and increase them: not to discern how exceedingly better it is to be helpful and beneficial, than to be mischievous and troublesome to one another. How foolishly

and unskilfully they judge, that think by unkind speech and harsh dealing to allay men's distempers, alter their opinions, or remove their prejudices; as if they should attempt to kill by ministering nourishment, or to extinguish a flame by pouring oil on it. How childish a thing it is eagerly to contend about trifles, for the superiority in some impertinent contest, for the satisfaction of some petty humor, for the possession of some inconsiderable toy: yea, how barbarous and brutish a thing it is to be fierce and impetuous in the pursuit of things that please us, snarling at, biting, and tearing all competitors of our game, or opposers of our undertaking. But how divine and amiable, how worthy of human nature, of civil breeding, of prudent consideration it is, to restrain partial desires, to condescend to equal terms, to abate from rigorous pretences, to appease discords, and vanquish enmities by courtesy and discretion; like the best and wisest commanders, who by skilful conduct, and patient attendance on opportunity, without striking of stroke, or shedding of blood, subdue their enemy.

3. How that peace with its near alliance and concomitants, its causes and effects, love, meekness, gentleness, and patience, are in sacred writ reputed the genuine fruits of the Holy Spirit, issues of divine grace, and offsprings of heavenly wisdom; producing like themselves a goodly progeny of righteous deeds. But that emulation, hatred, wrath, variance, and strife derive their extraction from fleshly lust, hellish craft, or beastly folly; propagating themselves also into a like ugly brood of wicked works. For so saith St. James, 'If ye have bitter zeal and strife in your hearts, glory not, nor be deceived untruly:' 'This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish: for where emulation and strife are, there is tumult, and every naughty thing: but the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, obsequious, full of mercy (or beneficence) and of good fruits, without partiality and dissimulation: and the fruit of righteousness is sowed in peace to those that make peace:' 'And from whence are wars and quarrels among you? Are they not hence, even from your lusts, that war in your members?' Likewise, 'He loveth transgression that loveth strife;' and, 'A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes,' saith Solomon. That the

most wicked and miserable of creatures is described by titles denoting enmity and discord: the hater (Satan), the enemy (ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος), the accuser (ὁ κατήγορος), the slanderer (ὁ διάβολος), the destroyer (ὁ ἀπολλύων), the furious dragon, and mischievously treacherous snake; and how sad it is to imitate him in his practices, to resemble him in his qualities. But that the best, most excellent, and most happy of Beings delights to be styled, and accordingly to express himself, The God of love, mercy, and peace; and his blessed Son to be called, and to be, The Prince of peace, the great Mediator, Reconciler, and Peace-maker; who is also said from on high to have visited us, 'to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; and to guide our feet in the ways of peace.' That, lastly, no devotion is pleasing, no oblation acceptable to God, conjoined with hatred, or proceeding from an unreconciled mind; for, 'If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift,' saith our Saviour.

I close up all with this corollary: that if we must live lovingly and peaceably with all men, then much more are we obliged to do so with all Christians: to whom by nearer and firmer bands of holy alliance we are related; by more precious communions in faith and devotion we are endeared; by more peculiar and powerful obligations of divine commands, sacramental vows, and formal professions we are engaged: our spiritual brethren, members of the same mystical body, temples of the same Holy Spirit, servants of the same Lord, subjects of the same Prince, professors of the same truth, partakers of the same hope, heirs of the same promise, and candidates of the same everlasting happiness.

Now, Almighty God, the most good and beneficent Maker, gracious Lord, and merciful Preserver of all things, infuse into our hearts those heavenly graces of meekness, patience, and benignity, grant us and his whole church, and all his creation, to serve him quietly here, and in a blissful rest to praise and magnify him for ever: to whom, with his blessed Son, the great Mediator and Prince of peace, and with his Holy Spirit, the

everflowing spring of all love, joy, comfort, and peace, be all honor, glory, and praise. And,

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowlege and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you for ever. Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXXI.

PSALM CXII.—VERSE 9.

As this whole psalm appears to have a double intent; one to describe the proper actions and affections of a truly pious man; the other to declare the happiness of such a man's state, whether in way of result, or of gracious recompense from God; so this *verse* particularly contains a good part of a pious man's character, and some considerable instances of his felicity; the former part affording us information concerning our duty, and the latter encouragement in it.

For the former part; *he hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor;* these words in general import the liberal bounty and mercy which a pious man is wont to exercise; the doing of which is a necessary ingredient and conspicuous mark of his piety. But particularly they insinuate some things concerning the nature, the matter, the manner, and the object of those acts.

The words being put indefinitely, or without determining what is dispersed by him, may be supposed to imply a kind of universality in the matter of his beneficence; that he bestoweth whatever he hath, within compass of his possession or power. Farther, the word *dispersed* intimates the nature of his bounty, in exclusion of practices different from it. He dispers-eth, and is therefore not tenacious; doth not hoard up his goods, or keep them close to himself, to gratify his covetousness, nourish his pride, or pamper his sensuality; but sendeth them abroad for the use and benefit of others; not indeed of vain, riotous, and profuse persons, but of *the poor and needy.*

His *dispersing* also (or *scattering*) denotes the extent of the

pious man's bounty; that it is large and diffuse, and in a manner unrestrained: this practice in other parts of Scripture is termed *sowing;* see 2 Cor. ix. 6. 10. &c. also *watering,* (Prov. xi. 25.); which expressions seem to import a plentiful and promiscuous effusion of beneficence, &c. Thus the good man does not plant his bounty in one small hole, or spout it on one narrow spot; but disseminates and distils it all around, observing carefully that rule of the Apostle, *as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.* So the pious man hath *dispersed.* It follows,

He hath given to the poor. These words denote the freeness of his bounty, and determine the principal object thereof: he not only lendeth to those that may in time repay or requite him, but he freely giveth to the poor, that is, to those from whom he can expect nothing in return; &c. It may also be material to observe the form of speech here used, in reference to the time: *he hath dispersed, and he hath given,* or, *he doth disperse, he doth give;* which manner of speaking may seem to intimate the reality, certainty, and constancy of his practice; for what is past or present, we are secure of; and in morals, what one is said to have done, or to do, is always understood, according to habit or custom. *He hath dispersed,* and *given,* while he lives, not reserving the disposal of all at once on his death, or by his last will; that unwilling will, whereby men would seem to give somewhat when they can keep nothing: no; he hath freely dispersed, without waiting till inevitable necessity, as it were, extorts it from him. He also doth it constantly, through all the course of his life, as opportunities present themselves. This may suffice for explication of the first words; the main purport of which is, to represent the liberal exercise of bounty and mercy to be the duty, practice, and proper character of a truly pious man; for a demonstration of which points, and for exciting us to a practice answerable thereto, several considerations will be propounded,

which show the weight, worth, and excellence of this duty. And first it is shown, with what advantage the holy Scripture represents it, and presses it on us.

1. We may consider that there is no sort of duties which God hath more expressly commanded, or more earnestly incalcated, than those of bounty and mercy towards our brethren; whence evidently the great moment of them, and their high value in the sight of God, may be inferred: this instanced by many examples in the ancient law: also in the more perfect dispensation of Christian grace.

2. It is indeed observable that, as in every kind that which is most excellent doth commonly assume to itself the name of the whole kind, so among the parts of righteousness (which word is used to comprehend all virtue and goodness) this of exercising bounty and mercy is peculiarly called *righteousness*; and works of this nature are by way of excellency termed *good works*.

3. We may consequently remark that in those places of Scripture where the divine law is abridged, and religion summed up into a few particulars of main importance, these duties constantly make a part: this fully shown.

4. Also in general descriptions of piety and goodness, the practice of these duties is specified as a grand ingredient of them: this pointed out.

5. So in the particular histories of good men this sort of practice is specially taken notice of, and expressed in their characters. Instanced in Abraham, (Heb. xiii. 2.) Job, &c.

6. So near to the heart of piety doth the holy Scripture lay the practice of these duties: and no wonder; for it often expressly declares charity to be the fulfilling of God's law, as the best expression of all our duty towards him, of faith in him, of love and reverence of him; and as either formally containing, or naturally producing all our duty towards our neighbor: this subject enlarged on.

7. But that we may be farther certified about the weight and worth of these duties, we may consider that to the observance of them most ample and excellent rewards are assigned; that in return for what we bestow on our poor brethren, God hath promised all sorts of the best blessings and mercies to us: this point fully illustrated.

8. And correspondently, grievous punishments are designed and denounced against the transgressors of these duties; the worst of miseries is their doom and portion: they by their conduct do forfeit God's love and favor; they lose his blessing and protection; they can have no sure possession, nor any comfortable enjoyment of their estate: this point enlarged on.

9. It is specially to be considered that at the final reckoning, when all men's actions shall be strictly scanned and justly sentenced, a particular regard will be had to the discharge or neglect of these duties: so great a stress therefore does God lay on them: and if we look up to him, or down on our poor neighbor, or reflect on ourselves, or on our wealth, we may every where discern reasons obliging us, and motives inducing us, to this practice. In regard to God,

1. We may consider that by exercising bounty and mercy, we are, as it were, kind and courteous unto God himself; by neglecting them we are unkind and rude to him; for whatever of good or ill is done by us unto the poor, God interprets and accepts as done unto himself.

2. By practising these duties we are just, by omitting them we are unjust, towards God; for our goods, our wealth, and our estates are none of them simply and properly our own; but God is necessarily the true and absolute proprietor of them. They are called the gifts of God; but we must not by that expression understand that God has parted with his own right to them; for they are deposited with us in trust, not alienated

from him; committed to us as stewards, not transferred to us as masters: this topic enlarged on.

3. The showing of mercy and bounty is the principal and most proper expression of our gratitude to God; so that in omitting this, we are not only very unjust, but highly ungrateful. We may seem in words and expressions to thank him; but a sparing hand gives the lie to the fullest mouth.

4. Indeed all our devotion, severed from a disposition to practise these duties, is no less than hypocrisy; cannot have any true worth in it; will not yield any good effect. Our prayers, if we are uncharitably disposed, are but demonstrations of egregious impudence and folly: this point enlarged on.

5. The conscientious practice of these duties plainly springs from those good dispositions of mind regarding God, which are the original grounds of all true piety; and the neglect of them issues from those vicious dispositions which have a peculiar inconsistency with piety; being destructive of its very foundation and root: this fully shown; and the impossibility of *serving God and Mammon* proved.

6. Farther we may consider that nothing is more conformable to God's nature, or renders us more like to him, than beneficence and mercy; that consequently nothing can be more grateful to him; that nothing is more contrary to the essential disposition of God than illiberality and unmercifulness; and therefore that nothing can be more distasteful to him: this subject enlarged on.

But before we deny relief to our poor neighbor, let us with the eyes of our mind look on him, and consider who he is; what he is in himself; and what he is in relation to us.

1. He whose need craves our bounty, whose misery demands our mercy; what is he? He is not truly so mean and sorry a thing, as the disguise of misfortune represents him. He who looks so pitifully accoutred, hath latent in him much of admi-

rable beauty and glory: he within himself contains a nature very excellent, an intelligent mind, and an immortal soul, by which he in some degree resembles God himself, and is comparable with angels: this subject enlarged on.

2. That distinction which thou standest on, and which seems so vast between thee and thy poor neighbor, what is it? whence did it come? whither tends it? It is not anywise natural, or according to primitive design; for as all men are in natural faculties and endowments equal, so were they all originally equal in condition. Sin introduced these degrees and distances; and God for promoting some good ends, and preventing certain mischiefs of strife and disorder, suffers them in a manner to continue, and enjoins our submission to them: but we mistake, if we think that natural equality and community are in effect quite taken away. No; every man hath still a competent patrimony due to him, and a sufficient provision for his tolerable subsistence: this point enlarged on.

3. It was also one main end of this difference among us, permitted and ordered by God's providence, that as some men's industry and patience might be exercised by their poverty, so other men by their wealth should have the ability of practising justice and charity; that so both poor and rich might thence become capable of recompenses, suitable to such performances.

We should also consider that a poor man, even as such, is not to be disregarded, and that poverty itself is no such contemptible thing as we are apt to imagine. If the world commonly call the rich man blessed, a better author hath pronounced the poor man such: moreover by poverty, the nurse of virtues, we conform to the state of the Son of God himself.

5. Thus a due reflexion on the poor man, his nature and state, will induce us to succor him. But let us also consider him as related to ourselves: every such person is our kinsman,

our brother, by indissoluble bands of blood, and agreement of nature, knit and united to us: this point enlarged on.

6. Farther, as the poor man is so nearly allied to us by the society of a common nature, so is he more strictly joined to us by the bands of spiritual consanguinity; all Christians, high and low, being children of the same heavenly Father, &c.

Moreover, if we reflect on ourselves, we cannot but observe many strong engagements to the same practice.

1. The very constitution, frame, and temper of our nature directs and inclines us thereto; whence by observing these duties, we observe our own nature, we improve it, we advance it to the best perfection it is capable of: by neglecting them, we thwart, impair, and debase the same.

2. And if the sensitive part within us suggests so much, the rational dictates more to us: that heavenly faculty, having such vast capacities and energies, was surely not created to serve mean or narrow designs, to scrape eternally in earth, or to amass heaps of clay for private enjoyment, &c.

3. Farther, examining ourselves, we may also observe that we are, in reality, what our poor neighbor appears to be, in many respects no less indigent and impotent than him: we no less depend for our subsistence on the arbitrary power of another, than he seems to rely on ours.

4. The great uncertainty and instability of our condition also requires our consideration. We that now flourish in so fair and full an estate, may soon be in the case of that poor creature who solicits our relief: this subject enlarged on.

5. And as wisdom advises, so does equity exact these duties from us: for were any of us in the needy man's plight, we should believe that our case deserved commiseration; should with importunity demand relief; and complain of cruelty, if succor were denied us.

We should also remember concerning ourselves, that we are mortal and frail: this subject dilated on at length.

Farthermore, if we contemplate our wealth itself, we may therein descry great motives to charity.

1. Thus to employ our riches is really the best use of which they are capable; not only the most innocent, worthy, and plausible, but the most safe, pleasant, advantageous, and consequently most prudent way of disposing of them. To keep them close without use or enjoyment, is a sottish piece of extravagance or madness, by which a rich man impoverishes himself: this point enlarged on.

2. But setting aside the absurd excuses of penuriousness, we may consider that, secluding the good use of them in beneficence, riches are very impertinent, cumbersome, dangerous things; either superfluous toys, troublesome clogs, treacherous snares, or all these in combination.

3. Again, we may consider that to dispense our wealth liberally is the best way to preserve it, and to continue masters thereof: what we give is not thrown away, but saved from danger: while we detain it at home, it is really abroad and at adventures. Even according to ordinary human estimation, abstracted from the special providence of God, the liberal person hath, in consequence of his bounty, more real security for his wealth than he could obtain by any other method: this point enlarged on.

4. Nay, we may consider that the exercise of liberality is the most advantageous way of improving an estate, whilst tenacity and illiberality tend to the diminution and decay thereof: the way to obtain a great increase is to sow much.

5. Farther, the dispersing a part of our goods among the poor will qualify us to enjoy the rest with satisfaction and comfort.

6. One consideration still remains persuasive of this practice: it is this. The peculiar nature of our religion specially requires it; the honor thereof exacts it from us: nothing better suits Christianity, nothing more graces it, than liberality; nothing

is more inconsistent therewith, or more disparages it, than miserable sordidness. No niggard is so absurd as a Christian niggard: this point explained.

7. To all these considerations, examples might be adduced for the practice of this kind of charity. We have for it the patterns of God himself, of our blessed Saviour, of his disciples, and of saints and eminent servants of God in all times: but no words would be so apt to move and excite the audience as the case itself.

The Report read.

For encouragement to the practice of charity, let us now reflect briefly on the latter part of the text; which represents some instances of the felicity which is peculiar to a bountiful person, or some rewards appropriated to him. The first is, *His righteousness endureth for ever:* which words are capable of various senses; but according to all of them the bountiful man's righteousness doth endure for ever; that is, very lastingly, in any sense; or for an absolute perpetuity, in some sense: the various truths which the words involve briefly touched on.

1. As for future reputation and fame, it is evident that it peculiarly attends on this practice: the bountiful person is especially that *just* man whose *memory is blessed;* that is, prosecuted with praise and commendation.

2. The effects of his righteousness are likewise very durable: when he is departed hence, and is no more seen, he remains visible and sensible in the footsteps and fruits of his goodness towards the poor, the sick, and the afflicted, who still rejoice in the comfort and ease which he procured for them; whilst the world in general benefits from his example.

3. His righteousness also endureth in respect to his posterity, on whom his beneficence will have entailed real blessings; entitling them to the rewards of grateful men, and to God's special care and protection.

4. It endureth for ever in the perpetual favor of God, and in the eternal rewards which he has prepared for it: when all the fashion of this world, with its glories, are gone, ***his righteousness shall then endure for ever.***

It follows, ***his horn shall be exalted with honor.*** A horn is an emblem of power and of dignity. And that this shall so be, may appear from many considerations.

1. Honor is inseparably annexed thereto, as its natural companion and shadow. God hath impressed on all virtue a majesty and a beauty, which command respect, and extort veneration from men; but whilst other virtues are seen and approved as goodly to the sight, this is tasted and felt; this by the most sensible experience is found pleasant and profitable; and it is therefore most highly prized.

2. But farther, an accession of honor, according to gracious promise, is due from God unto the bountiful person, and is by special promise surely conferred on him: and there is no kind of piety or obedience, whereby God himself is more signally honored than by this; since from it proceed those ***good works***, the which ***men seeing***, are apt ***to glorify our father which is in heaven.***

3. God will thus exalt the bountiful man's horn even here in this world; and to an infinitely higher pitch he will advance it in a future state: he shall there be set at the right hand, in a most honorable place and rank, among the chief friends and favorites of the Heavenly King. Conclusion.

SERMON XXXI.*

THE DUTY AND REWARD OF BOUNTY TO THE POOR.

PSALM CXII.—VERSE 9.

He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honor.

As this whole Psalm appears to have a double intent; one to describe the proper actions and affections of a truly religious or pious man; (of a man 'who feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments;') the other to declare the happiness of such a man's state, consequent on those his affections and actions, whether in way of natural result or of gracious recompense from God: so doth this verse particularly contain both a good part of a pious man's character, and some considerable instances of his felicity. The first words ('He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor') express part of his character; the latter ('His righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honor') assign instances of his felicity. So that our text hath two parts, one affording us good information concerning our duty, the other yielding great encouragement to the performance thereof; for we are obliged to follow the pious man's practice, and so doing we shall assuredly partake of his condition. These parts we shall in order prosecute, endeavoring (by God's assistance) somewhat to illustrate the

* This Sermon was preached at the Spital on Wednesday in Easter Week, A. D. 1671.

words themselves, to confirm the truths couched in them, and to inculcate the duties which they imply.

For the first part, 'He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor;' these words in general do import the liberal bounty and mercy which a pious man is wont to exercise; doing which doth in good part constitute him pious, and signally declareth him such; is a necessary ingredient of his piety, and a conspicuous mark thereof. But particularly they insinuate some things concerning the nature, the matter, the manner, and the object of those acts.

'He hath dispersed, he hath given.' Those words being put indefinitely, or without determining what is dispersed and given by him, may be supposed to imply a kind of universality in the matter of his beneficence; that he bestoweth whatever he hath within compass of his possession or his power; his τὰ ὑπάρχοντα, (the things which he hath,) and his τὰ ἐνόντα, (the things which he may,) according to the prescriptions of our Lord in the gospel. Every thing, I say, which he hath in substance, or can do by his endeavor, that may conduce to the support of the life, or the health, or the welfare in any kind of his neighbor, to the succor or relief of his indigency, to the removal or easement of his affliction, he may well here be understood to disperse and give. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, entertaining the stranger, ransoming the captive, easing the oppressed, comforting the sorrowful, assisting the weak, instructing or advising the ignorant, together with all such kinds or instances of beneficence, may be conceived either meant directly as the matter of the good man's dispersing and giving, or by just analogy of reason reducible thereto: substantial alms, as the most sensible and obvious matter of bounty, was (it is probable) especially intended, but thence no manner of expressing it is to be excluded; for the same reasons which oblige us, the same affections which dispose us to bestow our money, or deal our bread, will equally bind and move us to contribute our endeavor and advice, for the sustenance and comfort of our poor neighbor. Answerably our discourse will more expressly regard the principal matter, liberal communication of our goods; but it may be referred to all sorts of beneficence.

Farther, the word 'dispersed' intimateth the nature of his

bounty, in exclusion of practices different from it. He disperseth, and is therefore not tenacious, doth not hoard up his goods, or keep them close to himself, for the gratifying his covetous humor, or nourishing his pride, or pampering his sensuality; but sendeth them abroad for the use and benefit of others. He disperseth his goods, and therefore doth not fling them away altogether, as if he were angry with them, or weary of them, as if he loathed or despised them; but fairly and softly with good consideration he disposeth of them here and there, as reason and need do require. He disperseth them to the poor, not dissipateth them among vain or lewd persons in wanton or wicked profusions, in riotous excesses, in idle divertisements, in expensive curiosities, in hazardous gamings, in any such courses which swallow whole all that a man hath, or do so cripple him, that he becomes unable to disperse any thing: our good man is to be understood wisely provident, honestly industrious, and soberly frugal, that we may have wherewith to be just first, and then liberal.

His dispersing also (or scattering, so the Hebrew* word here used is otherwhere rendered: 'There is,' saith the wise man, 'that scattereth, and yet increaseth:' where we may remark that this word singly by itself, without any adjunct matter to limit or interpret it, is used to signify this kind of practice. This his dispersing, I say, also) denotes the extent of the pious man's bounty, that it is very large and diffusive, and in a manner unrestrained; that it reacheth to many places, and is withheld from no persons within the verge of his power, and opportunity to do good. This practice commonly by a like phrase (unto which perhaps this word refers) is termed 'sowing:' 'He,' saith St. Paul, 'which soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall also reap bountifully.' Now, he that soweth, having chosen a good soil, and a fit season, doth not regard one particular spot, but throweth all about so much as his hand can hold, so far as the strength of his arm doth carry. It is likewise called 'watering;' ('He that watereth,' saith Solomon, 'shall be watered himself:') which expression also seemeth to import a plentiful

* Eph. iv. 28. פזר

and promiscuous effusion of good, dropping in showers on dry and parched places; that is, on persons dry for want, or parched with affliction. So the good man doth not plant his bounty in one small hole, or spout it on one narrow spot, but with an open hand disseminates it, with an impartial regard distils it all about. He stints it not to his own family or relations; to his neighbors, or friends, or benefactors; to those of his own sect and opinion, or of his humor and disposition; to such as serve him, or oblige him, or please him; whom some private interest ties, or some particular affection endears him to; but scatters it indifferently and unconfinedly toward all men that need it; toward mere strangers, yea, toward known enemies; toward such who never did him any good, or can ever be able to do any; yea, even toward them who have done evil to him, and may be presumed ready to do more. Nothing in his neighbor but absence of need, nothing in himself but defect of ability, doth curb or limit his beneficence. In that προθυμία, (that proclivity and promptitude of mind) which St. Paul speaketh of, he doth good everywhere: wherever a man is, there is a room for his wishing well, and doing good, if he can: he observes that rule of the Apostle, 'As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.' So the pious man hath dispersed. It follows,

'He hath given to the poor.' These words denote the freeness of his bounty, and determine the principal object thereof: he not only lendeth (though he also doth that on reasonable occasion; for, 'a good man,' as it is said before in this Psalm, 'showeth mercy, and lendeth;' and otherwhere, 'the righteous is ever merciful, and lendeth;' he, I say, not only sometimes willingly lendeth) to those who in time may repay, or requite him; but he freely giveth to the poor, that is, to those from whom he can expect no retribution back. He doth not (as good and pious, he doth not) present the rich: to do so is but a cleanly way of begging, or a subtile kind of trade; it is hardly courtesy; it is surely no bounty; for such persons (if they are not very sordid or very careless, and such men are not usually much troubled with presents) will, it is likely, overdo him, or at least will be even with him in kindness. In doing this, there is little virtue; for it there will be small re-

ward. For, 'if you do good to them who do good to you,' (or whom you conceive able and disposed to requite you,) ποία χάρις, 'what thanks' are due to you? For that, saith our Saviour, 'even sinners (even men notoriously bad) do the same:' 'and if you lend to them from whom you hope to receive, what thanks have you? For sinners even lend to sinners, to receive as much again.' All men commonly, the bad no less than the good, are apt to be superfluously kind in heaping favors on those whom fortune befriends, and whose condition requires not their courtesy; every one almost is ready to adopt himself into the kindred, or to screw himself into the friendship of the wealthy and prosperous: but where kindred is of use, there it is seldom found; it is commonly so deaf, as not to hear when it is called; so blind as not to discern its proper object and natural season, ('the time of adversity, for which a brother is born.') Men disclaim alliance with the needy, and shun his acquaintance; so the wise man observed, 'all the brethren of the poor do hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him?' Thus it is in vulgar practice: but the pious man is more judicious, more just, and more generous in the placing of his favors; he is courteous to purpose, he is good to those who need. He, as such, doth not make large entertainments 'for his friends, his brethren, his kindred, his rich neighbors;' but observes that precept of our Lord, 'When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot recompense thee; thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' Thus the pious man giveth, that is, with a free heart and pure intention bestoweth his goods on the indigent, without designing any benefit, or hoping for any requital to himself; except from God, in conscience, respect, and love to whom he doeth it.

It may be also material to observe the form of speech here used in reference to the time: 'He hath dispersed, and he hath given;' or, 'He doth disperse, he doth give;' (for in the Hebrew language the past and present times are not distinguished:) which manner of speaking may seem to intimate the reality, or the certainty, and the constancy of his practice in this kind; for what is past or present, we are infallibly secure of; and in morals, what one is said to have done, or to do, is

always understood according to habit or custom. It is not, 'he will disperse, he will give;' that were no fit description of a good man; to pretend to, would be no argument of piety; those words might import uncertainty, and delay in his practice. He that saith, 'I will give,' may be fallacious in his professions, may be inconsistent with his resolutions, may wilfully or negligently let slip the due season of performing it. Our good man is not a 'Doson,' or 'Will-give,' (like that king of Macedon, who got that name from often signifying an intention of giving, but never giving in effect;) he not only purposes well, and promises fairly for the future, but he hath effectually done it, and perseveres doing it on every fit occasion. He puts not his neighbor into tedious expectations, nor puts him off with frivolous excuses, saying to him, as it is in the Proverbs, 'go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give,' when he hath it by him: he bids him not have patience, or says unto him, 'depart in peace,' when his need is urgent, and his pain impatient, when hunger or cold do then pinch him, when sickness incessantly vexeth him, when present straits and burdens oppress him; but he affordeth a ready, quick, and seasonable relief.

'He hath dispersed,' and given, while he lives, not reserving the disposal of all at once on his death, or by his last will; that unwilling will, whereby men would seem to give somewhat, when they can keep nothing; drawing to themselves those commendations and thanks, which are only due to their mortality; whenas were they immortal, they would never be liberal: No; it is, 'he hath freely dispersed;' not an inevitable necessity will extort it from him; it cannot be said of him, that he never does well, but when he dies; so he hath done it really and surely.

He also doth it constantly, through all the course of his life, whenever good opportunity presents itself. He doth it not by fits or by accident, according to unstable causes or circumstances moving him, (when bodily temper or humor inclineth him, when a sad object makes vehement impression on him, when shame obligeth him to comply with the practice of others, when he may thereby promote some design, or procure some glory to himself,) but his practice is constant and uniform,

being drawn from steady principles, and guided by certain rules, proceeding from reverence to God, and good-will toward man, following the clear dictates and immutable laws of conscience. Thus hath the pious man 'dispersed,' and 'given to the poor:' and let thus much suffice for explicatory reflexion on the first words.

The main drift and purport of which is, to represent the liberal exercising of bounty and mercy to be the necessary duty, the ordinary practice, and the proper character of a truly pious man; so that performing such acts is a good sign of true piety; and omitting them is a certain argument of ungodliness. For the demonstration of which points, and for exciting us to a practice answerable, I shall propound several considerations, whereby the plain reasonableness, the great weight, the high worth and excellency of this duty, together with its strict connexion with other principal duties of piety, will appear. And first, I will show with what advantage the holy Scripture represents it to us, or presses it on us.

[*First Head of Discourse.*] 1. We may consider that there is no sort of duties which God hath more expressly commanded, or more earnestly inculcated, than these of bounty and mercy toward our brethren: whence evidently the great moment of them, and their high value in God's esteem may be inferred. Even in the ancient law, we may observe very careful provisions made for engaging men to works of this kind, and the performance of them is with huge life and urgency prescribed: 'Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother.'—'Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, unto thy poor, and to thy needy in the land.' So did Moses, in God's name, with language very significant and emphatical, enjoin to the children of Israel. The holy prophets also do commonly with an especial heat and vigor press these duties, most smartly reproving the transgression or neglect of them; especially when they reclaim men from their wicked courses, urging them seriously to return unto God and goodness, they propose this practice as a singular instance most expressive of their conversion, most apt to appease God's wrath, most effectual to the recovery of his favor. 'Wash you,' saith God in Isaiah, 'make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine

eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well.' So in general he exhorts to repentance: then immediately he subjoins these choice instances thereof: 'Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.'—'Come now,' then he adds, 'let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' When Daniel would prescribe to king Nebuchadnezzar the best way of amendment, and the surest means of averting God's judgments impendent on him, he thus speaks: 'Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee; break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.'* This he culled out as of all pious acts chiefly grateful to God, and clearly testifying repentance; and, 'so very impious a person was alms able to justify,' says the Father thereupon. So also when God himself would declare what those acts are which render penitential devotions most agreeable to him, and most effectual, he thus expresseth his mind: 'Is not this the fast which I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thine house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?' Of so great consideration and moment was this sort of duties, ever under that old dispensation of weakness, servility, and fear; so much tenderness of compassion and benignity did God exact even from that hard-hearted and worldly people, who were so little capable of the best rules, and had encouragements, in comparison, so mean toward performances of this nature. The same we may well conceive, under the more perfect discipline of universal amity, of ingenuity, of spiritual grace and goodness, in a higher strain, with more force and greater obligation to be imposed on us, who have so much stronger engagements, and immensely greater encouragements to them. And so indeed it is: for those precepts delivered by our Lord, 'Sell all that you have, and give

* Τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου ἐλεημοσύναις λύτρωσαι· so the LXX. render those words, reading, it seems, פרה for פרק.

alms;' 'If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor;' 'Give to every man that asketh thee;' 'Treasure not up to yourselves treasures on the earth,' do indeed sound high, but are not insignificant or impertinent. They cannot signify or design less, than that we should be always, in affection and disposition of mind, ready to part with any thing we have for the succor of our poor brethren; that to the utmost of our ability (according to moral estimation prudently rated) on all occasions we should really express that disposition in our practice; that we are exceedingly obliged to the continual exercise of these duties in a very eminent degree. These indeed were the duties which our Lord, as he did frequently in his discourse commend and prescribe, so he did most signally exemplify in his practice; his whole life being in effect but one continual act of most liberal bounty and mercy toward mankind; in charity to whom he outdid his own severest rules, being content never to possess any wealth, never to enjoy any ease in this world. And therein (both as to doctrine and practice) did the holy Apostles closely follow their Master: 'As poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.' So they throughly in deeds practised these duties, which in words they taught and earnestly pressed; admonishing their converts to 'distribute to the necessities of the saints,' to 'do good to all men;' 'to do good, and to communicate not to forget; to show mercy with cheerfulness,' to 'put on bowels of mercy;' to 'be kind and tender-hearted one toward another;' to 'abound in the grace of liberality.' Such are their directions and injunctions to all Christian people; so did they preach themselves, and so they enjoined others to preach. 'Charge the rich in this world,' saith St. Paul to his scholar Timothy, 'that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;' and, 'These things,' saith he likewise, advising bishop Titus, 'I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which believe in God may be careful to maintain good works;' what good works he meaneth, the reason adjoined doth show; 'For these things,' saith he, 'are good and profitable unto men.'

2. It is indeed observable that as in every kind that which is most excellent doth commonly assume to itself the name of

the whole kind; so among the parts of righteousness (which word is used to comprehend all virtue and goodness) this of exercising bounty and mercy is peculiarly called righteousness: so that righteousness and mercifulness, (or alms-deeds,) the righteous and bountiful person, are in Scripture expression ordinarily confounded, as it were, or undistinguishably put one for the other; it being often, when commendations are given to righteousness, and rewards promised to righteous persons, hard to discern whether the general observance of God's law, or the special practice of these duties, are concerned in them. Likewise works of this nature are in way of peculiar excellency termed good works; and to perform them is usually styled, to do good, and to do well: (*ἀγαθὸν ἐργάζεσθαι, καλὸν ποιεῖν, ἀγαθοεργεῖν, ἀγαθυποιεῖν, εὐποιεῖν, εὐεργετεῖν*, are words applied to this purpose;) which manners of expression do argue the eminent dignity of these performances.

3. We may also consequently mark that in those places of Scripture where the divine law is abridged, and religion summed up into a few particulars of main importance, these duties constantly make a part: so when the prophet Micah briefly reckons up those things which are best in the law, and chiefly required by God, the whole catalogue of them consisting but of three particulars, mercy comes in for one; 'He hath showed thee, O man,' saith he, 'what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' Likewise of those (*βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου*, those) more substantial and 'weighty things of God's law,' the neglect of which our Saviour objecteth as an argument of impiety, and a cause of woe, to those pretending zealots, this is one: 'Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.' The sum of St. John the Baptist's instruction of the people is by St. Luke reduced to this point; 'The people asked him, saying, What shall we do?' He answering saith unto them, 'He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.' St. James's system of religion is this: 'Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this; to visit the

fatherless and widow in their affliction, (that is, to comfort and relieve all distressed and helpless persons,) and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' St. Paul seems to be yet more compendious and close: 'Bear ye,' saith he, 'one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' Yea, God himself compriseth all the substantial part of religion herein, when, comparing it with the circumstantial part, he saith, 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.'

4. It is in like manner considerable that in the general descriptions of piety and goodness, the practice of these duties is specified as a grand ingredient of them. In this Psalm, where such a description is intended, it is almost the only particular instance; and it is not only mentioned, but reiterated in divers forms of expression. In the 37th Psalm it is affirmed and repeated, that 'the righteous showeth mercy; he showeth mercy; and giveth; he showeth mercy, and lendeth.' In the Proverbs it is a commendation of the virtuous woman, 'whose price is far above rubies,' that 'she stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, stretcheth forth both her hands to the needy.' And in Ezekiel, (which is especially remarkable,) the 18th chapter, where the principal things constituting a pious man are more than once professedly enumerated, this among a very few other particulars is expressed, and taketh up much room in the account; of such a person (who 'shall surely live, and not die,' that is, who certainly shall abide in God's favor, and enjoy the happy consequences thereof) it is supposed that he 'neither hath oppressed any, nor hath withholden the pledge, nor hath spoiled by violence; but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, and hath taken off his hand from the poor.'

5. Also in the particular histories of good men this sort of practice is specially taken notice of, and expressed in their characters. In the story of our father Abraham, his benignity to strangers, and hospitableness, is remarkable among all his deeds of goodness, being propounded to us as a pattern and encouragement to the like practice. In this the conscience of Job did solace itself, as in a solid assurance of his integrity: 'I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready

to perish came on me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing. I was eyes to the blind, and feet I was to the lame; I was a father to the poor. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?' Hence also did the good publican recommend himself to the favor and approbation of our Saviour, saying, 'Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor:' hence did 'salvation come to his house:' hence he is proclaimed, 'a son of Abraham.' Of Dorcas, that good woman, who was so gracious and precious among the disciples, this is the commendation and character; 'She was full of good works and alms-deeds, which she did;' such practice made her capable of that favor, so great and extraordinary, the being restored to life; at least in St. Chrysostom's judgment: 'The force of her alms,' saith he, 'did conquer the tyranny of death.' Cornelius also, that excellent person, who was, though a Gentile, so acceptable to God, and had so extraordinary graces conferred on him, is thus represented; 'He was a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house; who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.' We may add, that to be hospitable (one branch of these duties, and inferring the rest) is reckoned a qualification of those who are to be the guides and patterns of goodness unto others. And particularly, one fit to be promoted to a widow's office in the church is thus described; 'Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children; if she have lodged strangers; if she have washed the saints' feet; if she have relieved the afflicted; if she have diligently followed every good work.'

6. So near to the heart of piety doth the holy Scripture lay the practice of these duties: and no wonder; for it often expressly declares charity to be the fulfilling of God's law, as the best expression of all our duty toward God, of faith in him, love and reverence of him, and as either formally containing, or naturally producing all our duty toward our neighbor. And of charity, works of bounty and mercy are both the chief instances, and the plainest signs: for whereas all charity doth consist either in mental desire, or in verbal signification, or in effectual performance of good to our neighbor; this last is the end, the completion, and the assurance of the rest. Good-will

is indeed the root of charity; but that lies under ground, and out of sight; nor can we conclude its being or life without visible fruits of beneficence. Good words are at best but fair leaves thereof, such as may, and too often do, proceed from a weak and barren disposition of mind. But these good works are real fruits, (so St. Paul calls them; 'Let ours also,' saith he, 'learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful,') which declare a true life, and a good strength of charity in the bearer of them: by them τὸ γνήσιον τῆς ἀγάπης, 'the sincerity (or genuineness) of our charity is proved.'* For as no man ever doth impress a false stamp on the finest metal; so costly charity is seldom counterfeit. It is to decline spending their goods or their pains, that men forge and feign; pretending to make up in wishing well, the defect of doing so, and paying words instead of things: but he that freely imparts what he hath, or can do for his neighbor's good, needs no other argument to evince that he loves in good earnest, nor can indeed well use any other: for words, if actions are wanting, seem abusive; and if actions are present, they are superfluous. Wherefore St. John thus advises; 'My little children, let us not love in word, or in tongue, (ἀλλ' ἔργῳ,) but in work and in truth.' To love in work, and to love in truth, he signifies to be the same thing; and to pretend love in speech, without practising it in deed, he implies not allowable. And St. James in way of comparison says, that as faith without works is dead, so love without beneficence is useless. For, 'If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto him, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith without works is dead.' Cold wishes of good, working no real benefit to our neighbor, and a faint assent unto truth, producing no constant obedience to God, are things near of kin, and of like value; both of little worth or use. Charity then being the main point of religion, mercy and bounty being the chief parts of charity, well may these duties be placed in so high a rank, according to the divine heraldry of Scripture.

* 2 Cor. viii. 8.

7. To inforce which observations, and that we may be farther certified about the weight and worth of these duties, we may consider that to the observance of them most ample and excellent rewards are assigned; that, in return for what we bestow on our poor brethren, God hath promised all sorts of the best mercies and blessings to us. The best of all good things, (that which in David's opinion was better than life itself,) the fountain of all blessings, (God's love and favor, or mercy,) is procured thereby, or is annexed to it. For, 'God loveth a cheerful giver,' saith St. Paul; and, 'The merciful shall obtain mercy,' saith our Saviour: and, 'Mercy rejoiceth against judgment,' (or boasteth, and triumpheth over it; ἔλεος κατακαυχᾶται κρίσεως· that is, it appeaseth God's wrath, and prevents our condemnation and punishment,) saith St. James; God will not continue displeased with him, nor will withhold his mercy from him, who is kind and merciful to his neighbor. It is true, if rightly understood, what the Hebrew wise man saith, 'Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms maketh an atonement for sins.' For this practice hath the nature and name of a sacrifice, and is declared as such both in excellency and efficacy to surpass all other sacrifices; to be most acceptable to God, most available for expiation of guilt, most effectual in obtaining mercy and favor. Other sacrifices performed in obedience to God's appointment (on virtue of our Lord's perfect obedience, and with regard to this pure sacrifice of himself) did in their way propitiate God, and atone sin: but this hath an intrinsic worth, and a natural aptitude to those purposes. Other obligations did signify a willingness to render a due homage to God: this really and immediately performs it. They were shadows or images well resembling that duty, (parting with any thing we have for the sake of God, and for purchasing his favor,) whereof this is the body and substance. This is therefore preferred as in itself excelling the rest, and more estimable in God's sight; so that in comparison or competition therewith, the other seem to be slighted and rejected. 'I will,' saith God, 'have mercy, and not sacrifice:' and, 'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?' Will he? that is, he will not be pleased with such sacrifices, if they be abstracted from the

more delightful sacrifices of bounty and mercy. God never made an exception against these, or derogated from them in any case: they absolutely and perpetually are, as St. Paul speaketh, 'odours of a sweet smell, sacrifices acceptable and well-pleasing to God.' And the Apostle to the Hebrews seconds him: 'To do good,' saith he, 'and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' By these, all other works and all enjoyments are sanctified: for, 'Give alms,' saith our Lord, 'of what ye have; and, behold, all things are pure unto you.' Such charitable persons are therefore frequently pronounced blessed, that is, in effect instated in a confluence of all good things. 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor,' says the psalmist; and, 'He that hath a bountiful eye is blessed,' saith Solomon; and, 'He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he,' saith the wise man again; and, 'Blessed are the merciful,' saith our Lord himself. So in gross and generally. Particularly also and in retail, the greatest blessings are expressly allotted to this practice; prosperity in all our affairs is promised thereto. 'Thou,' saith Moses, 'shalt surely give thy poor brother, and thine heart shall not be grieved that thou givest unto him; because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.' Stability in a good condition is ordinarily consequent thereon: so the prophet Daniel implies, when, advising King Nebuchadnezzar to these works, he adds, 'If it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.' Deliverance from evil incumbent, protection in imminent danger, and support in afflictions, are the sure rewards thereof: so the psalmist assures us: 'Blessed,' saith he, 'is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed on earth; and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him on the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.' Security from all want is likewise a recompense proper thereto: for, 'He that giveth to the poor shall not lack,' saith the wise man. 'If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light arise in obscurity,' &c. Thriving in wealth and estate is another special reward: for,

'The liberal soul shall be made fat;' the same author gives us his word for it. Even of the good things here below, to those who for his sake in this or any other way do 'let go houses or lands,' our Lord promiseth the return of a hundredfold, either in kind or in value. So great encouragements are annexed to this practice even in relation to the concernments of this transitory life: but to them beside God hath destinated rewards incomparably more considerable and precious, spiritual and eternal rewards, treasures of heavenly wealth, crowns of endless glory, the perfection of joy and bliss to be dispensed 'at the resurrection of the just.' 'He that for my sake hath left houses or lands, shall receive a hundredfold now at this time, (or in this present life,) and in the world to come shall inherit everlasting life;' so infallible truth hath assured us. They who perform these duties are said to 'make themselves bags which wax not old, a treasure that faileth not in the heavens;' to 'make themselves friends of the unrighteous mammon, who, when they fail, (when they depart, and leave their earthly wealth,) will receive them into everlasting habitations;' to 'lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.' Such rewards are promised to the observers.

8. And correspondently grievous punishments are designed and denounced to the transgressors of these duties; the worst of miseries is their portion and doom: they, for being such, do forfeit God's love and favor; they lose his blessing and protection; they can have no sure possession, nor any comfortable enjoyment of their estate; for 'he,' saith St. James, 'shall have judgment without mercy, who showeth no mercy.' And of such a person it is said in Job, 'That which he laboreth for he shall restore, and shall not swallow it down: according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein; because he hath oppressed, and forsaken the poor.' (Not only because he hath unjustly oppressed, but because he hath uncharitably forsaken the poor.) If by the divine forbearance such persons do seem to enjoy a fair portion in this life, ('prospering in the world, and increasing in riches,') they will find a sad reckoning behind in the other world: this will be the result of that audit; 'Woe be unto you, rich men, for ye have

received your consolation;' (such rich men are meant, who have got, or kept, or used their wealth basely; who have detained all the consolation it yields to themselves, and imparted none to others;) and, 'Remember, son, thou didst receive thy good things in this life;' (so didst receive them, as to swallow them, and spend them here, without any provision or regard for the future in the use of them;) and, 'Cast that unprofitable servant (who made no good use of his talent) into utter darkness.' Such will be the fate of 'every one that treasures up to himself, and is not rich unto God;' not rich in piety and charity, not rich in performing for God's sake works of bounty and mercy.

9. It is indeed most considerable that at the final reckoning, when all men's actions shall be strictly scanned, and justly sentenced according to their true desert, a special regard will be had to the discharge or neglect of these duties. It is the bountiful and merciful persons, who have relieved Christ in his poor members and brethren, who in that day will appear to be the sheep at the right hand, and shall hear the good Shepherd's voice uttering those joyful words, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.' He doth not say, because you have made goodly professions, because you have been orthodox in your opinions, because you have frequented religious exercises, (have prayed often and long, have kept many fasts, and heard many sermons,) because you have been staunch in your conversations, because you have been punctual in your dealings, because you have maintained a specious guise of piety, sobriety, and justice; (although, indeed, he that will come off well at that great trial, must be responsible, and able to yield a good account in respect to all those particulars;) but because you have been charitably benign and helpful to persons in need and distress, therefore blessed are you, therefore enter into the kingdom of glorious bliss prepared for such persons. This proceeding more than intimates that, in the judgment of our Lord, no sort of virtue or good practice is to be preferred before that of charitable bounty; or ra-

ther that, in his esteem, none is equal thereto: so that if the question were put to him, which is one of them to Antiochus, (in Athanasius's works,*) which is the most eminent virtue? our Lord would resolve it no otherwise than is done by that father, affirming that mercifulness is the queen of virtues; for that, at the final account, the examination chiefly proceeds on that; it is made the special touchstone of piety, and the peculiar ground of happiness. On the other side, those who have been deficient in these performances (uncharitable and unmerciful persons) will at the last trial appear to be the wretched goats on the left hand, unto whom this uncomfortable speech shall by the great Judge be pronounced; 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.' It is not, we may see, for having done that which in this world is called rapine or wrong, for having pillaged or cozened their neighbor, for having committed adultery or murder, or any other thing prohibited, that these unhappy men are said to be formerly impeached, and finally condemned to that miserable doom; but for having been unkind and unmerciful to their poor brethren: this at that high tribunal will pass for a most enormous crime, for the capital offence; for this it is that they shall be cursed, and cast down into a wretched consortship with those malicious and merciless fiends, unto whose disposition they did so nearly approach.

Thus it appears how mighty a stress God in the holy Scripture doth lay on these duties, so peremptorily commanding them, so vehemently pressing them, so highly commending them, so graciously by promises alluring us to the performance, so dreadfully by threatenings deterring us from the neglect of them. What an affront then will it be to God's authority, what a distrust to his word, what a contempt of his power, his justice, his wisdom, what a despite to his goodness and mercy, if, notwithstanding all these declarations of his will and purposes, we shall presume to be uncharitable in this kind! There are also

* Athanasius, tom. ii.

considerations, (very many, very clear, and very strong,) which discover the great reasonableness and equity of these laws, with our indispensable obligation to obey them; the which indeed with greater force do exact these duties from us, and do more earnestly plead in the poor man's behalf, than he can beg or cry. If we either look up unto God, or down on our poor neighbor, if we reflect on ourselves, or consider our wealth itself, every where we may discern various reasons obliging us, and various motives inducing us to the practice of these duties.

[*Second Head of Discourse.*] In regard to God,

1. We may consider that, by exercising of bounty and mercy, we are kind and courteous to God himself; by neglecting those duties, we are unkind and rude to him: for that what of good or evil is by us done to the poor, God interprets and accepts as done to himself. The poor have a peculiar relation to God; he openly and frequently professeth himself their especial friend, patron, and protector; he is much concerned in, and particularly chargeth his providence with their support. In effect therefore they shall surely be provided for, one way or other; ('the poor shall eat and be satisfied: God will save their afflicted people:' 'The Lord preserveth the strangers, he relieveth the fatherless and widow.' 'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them:') but out of goodness to us, he chooseth, (if it may be, we freely concurring therein,) and best liketh, that it should be done by our hands; this conducing no less to our benefit, than to theirs; we thereby having opportunity to show our respect to himself, and to lay an engagement on him to do us good. God therefore lendeth the poor man his own name, and alloweth him to crave our succor for his sake. (When the poor man asketh us in God's name, or for God's sake, he doth not usurp or forge, he hath good authority, and a true ground for doing so:) God gives him credit from himself unto us for what he wants, and bids us charge what he receiveth on his own account; permitting us to reckon him obliged thereby, and to write him our debtor; engaging his own word and reputation duly to repay, fully to satisfy us. 'He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given, will

he pay him again,' saith the wise man: and, 'inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me,' saith our Saviour: and, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister,' saith the Apostle. What therefore we give to the poor, God accepteth as an expression of kindness to himself, being given to one of his friends and clients, in respect to him; he regards it as a testimony of friendly confidence in him, signifying that we have a good opinion of him, that we take him for able and willing to requite a good turn, that we dare take his word, and think our goods safe enough in his custody. But if we stop our ears, or shut our hands from the poor, God interprets it as a harsh repulse, and an heinous affront put on himself: we doing it to one who bears his name and wears his livery, (for the poor man's rags are badges of his relation unto God,) he thereby judges that we have little good-will, little respect, little compassion toward himself: since we vouchsafe not to grant him so mean a favor, since we refuse at his request, and (as it were) in his need, to accommodate him with a small sum, he justly reputes it as an argument of unkindly diffidence in him, that we have sorry thoughts of him, deeming him no good correspondent, little valuing his word, suspecting his goodness, his truth, or his sufficiency.

2. We by practising those duties are just, by omitting them are very unjust toward God. For our goods, our wealth, and our estate are indeed none of them simply or properly our own, so that we have an absolute property in them, or an intire disposal of them: no, we are utterly incapable of such a right unto them, or power over them: God necessarily is the true and absolute proprietary of them. They are called the gifts of God: but we must not understand that God, by giving them to us, hath parted with his own right to them: they are deposited with us in trust, not alienated from him; they are committed to us as stewards, not transferred on us as masters: they are so ours, that we have no authority to use them according to our will or fancy, but are obliged to manage them according to God's direction and order. He, by right immutable, is Lord paramount of all his creation; every thing unalienably belongs

to him on many accounts. He out of nothing made all things at first, and to every creature through each moment a new being is conferred by his preservative influence: originally therefore he is Lord of all things, and continually a new title of dominion over every thing springeth up unto him: it is his always, because he always maketh it. We ourselves are naturally mere slaves and vassals to him: as we can never be our own, (masters of ourselves, of our lives, of our liberties,) so cannot we ever properly be owners of any thing; there are no possible means, by which we can acquire any absolute title to the least mite; the principal right to what we seem to get, according to all law and reason, accrueth to our master. All things about us, by which we live, with which we work and trade, the earth which supports and feeds us, and furnisheth us with all commodities, the air we breathe, the sun and stars which cherish our life, are all of them his, his productions and his possessions, subsisting by his pleasure, subject to his disposal. How then can any thing be ours? How can we say, with the foolish churl Nabal, 'Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh, and give it?' Thine? O inconsiderate man! How camest thou by it? How dost thou hold it? Didst thou make it? Or dost thou preserve it? Canst thou claim any thing by nature? No; thou broughtest nothing with thee into the world; thou didst not bring thyself hither. Canst thou challenge any thing to thyself from chance? No, for there is no such thing as chance, all things being guided and governed by God's providence. Dost thou conceive thy industry can entitle thee to any thing? Thou art mistaken; for all the wit and strength thou appliest, the head thou contrivest with, and the hands thou workest with, are God's; all the success thou findest did wholly depend on him, was altogether derived from him; all thy projects were vain, all thy labors would be fruitless, did not he assist and bless thee. Thou dost vainly and falsely 'lift up thine heart, and forget the Lord thy God, whenas thy herds and flocks multiply, and thy silver and gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; if thou sayest in thy heart, My power, and the might of my hand, hath gotten me this wealth. But thou must remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.'

[——'Who am I,' saith David, 'and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee; and of thine own have we given thee:' 1 Chron. xxix. 14.] Since then on all scores every thing we have doth appertain to God, he may without any injury recal or resume whatever he pleaseth; and while he letteth any thing abide with us, we cannot justly use it otherwise than he hath appointed, we cannot duly apply it otherwise than to his interest and service. God then having enjoined, that after we have satisfied our necessities, and supplied our reasonable occasions, we should employ the rest to the relief of our poor neighbors; that 'if we have two coats, (one more than we need,) we should impart one to him that hath none;' if we have meat abundant, that we likewise communicate to him that wants it: God, by the poor man's voice, (or by his need and misery,) demanding his own from us, we are very unjust if we presume to withhold it; doubly unjust we are, both toward God and toward our neighbor: we are unfaithful stewards, misapplying the goods of our Master, and crossing his order: we are wrongful usurpers, detaining from our neighbor that which God hath allotted him; we are in the court of conscience; we shall appear at the bar of God's judgment no better than robbers, (under vizards of legal right and possession,) spoiling our poor brother of his goods; his, I say, by the very same title as any thing can be ours, by the free donation of God, fully and frequently expressed, as we have seen, in his holy word. (He cannot take it away by violence or surreption against our will, but we are bound willingly to yield it up to him; to do that, were disorder in him: to refuse this is wrong in us.) 'Tis the hungry man's bread which we hoard up in our barns, 'tis his meat on which we glut, and his drink which we guzzle: 'tis the naked man's apparel which we shut up in our presses, or which we exorbitantly ruffle and flaunt in: 'tis the needy person's gold and silver which we closely hide in our chests, or spend idly, or put out to useless use. We are in thus holding, or thus spending, truly πλεονέκται, not only covetous, but wrongful, or havers of more than our own, against the will of the right owners; plainly violating that precept of Solomon; 'Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is

in the power of thy hand to do it.' If we are ambitious of having a property in somewhat, or affect to call any thing our own, 'tis only by nobly giving that we can accomplish our desire; that will certainly appropriate our goods to our use and benefit: but from basely keeping, or vainly embezzling them, they become not our possession and enjoyment, but our theft and our bane. (These things, spoken after the holy fathers, wise instructors in matters of piety, are to be understood with reasonable temperament, and practised with honest prudence. I cannot stand to discuss cases, and remove scruples; a pious charity will easily discern its due limits and measures, both declining perplexity, and not evading duty. The sum is, that justice towards God and man obligeth us not to suffer our poor brother to perish, or pine away for want, when we surfeit and swim in plenty, or not to see him lack necessaries, when we are well able to relieve him.)

3. Showing bounty and mercy are the most proper and the principal expressions of our gratitude unto God; so that in omitting them we are not only very unjust, but highly ingrateful. Innumerable are the benefits, favors, and mercies, (both common and private,) which God hath bestowed on us, and doth continually bestow: he incessantly showers down blessings on our heads; 'he daily loadeth us with his benefits;' he perpetually 'crowneth us with loving-kindness and tender mercies:' all that we are, all that we have, all that we can hope for of good, is alone from his free bounty: our beings and lives, with all the conveniences and comforts of them, we intirely owe to him as to our Maker, our Preserver, our constant Benefactor: all the excellent privileges we enjoy, and all the glorious hopes we have as Christians, we also stand indebted for purely to his undeserved mercy and grace. And, 'What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward us?' Shall we render him nothing? Shall we refuse him any thing? Shall we boggle at making returns so inconsiderable, in regard to what he hath done for us? What is a little gold, or silver, or brass perhaps, which our poor neighbor craveth of us, in comparison to our life, our health, our reason; to all accommodations of our body, and all endowments of our mind? What are all the goods in the world to the love and favor of God, to

the pardon of our sins, to the gifts of God's Spirit, to the dignity of being the children of God and heirs of salvation; to the being freed from extreme miseries, and made capable of eternal felicity? And doth not this unexpressible goodness, do not all these inestimable benefits require some correspondent thankfulness? Are we not obliged, shall we not be willing to exhibit some real testimony thereof? And what other can we exhibit beside this? We cannot directly or immediately requite God, for he cannot so receive any thing from us; he is not capable of being himself enriched or exalted, of being anywise pleasured or bettered by us, who is in himself infinitely sufficient, glorious, joyful, and happy: 'Our goodness extends not to him;' 'a man cannot be profitable to his Maker.' All that we can do in this kind is thus indirectly, in the persons of his poor relations, to gratify him, imparting at his desire, and for his sake, somewhat of what he hath bestowed on us on them. Such a thankful return we owe unto God, not only for what he hath given us, but even for the capacity of giving to others; for that we are in the number of those who can afford relief, and who need not to demand it. Our very wealth and prosperous state should not seem to us so contemptible things, that we should be unwilling to render somewhat back in grateful resentment for them: the very act of giving is itself no mean benefit; (having so much of honor in it, so much of pleasure going with it, so much of reward following it;) we receive far more than we return in giving; for which therefore it is fit that we should return our gratitude, and consequently that we should perform these duties. For indeed without this practice, no other expression of gratitude can be true in itself, or can be acceptable to God. We may seem abundantly to thank him in words; but a sparing hand gives the lie to the fullest mouth: we may spare our breath, if we keep back our substance; for all our praising God for his goodness, and blessing him with our lips, if we will do nothing for him, if we will not part with anything for his sake, appears mere compliment; is, in truth, plain mockery, and vile hypocrisy.

4. Yea, which we may farther consider, all our devotion, severed from a disposition of practising these duties, is no less such; cannot have any true worth in it, shall not yield any

good effect from it. Our prayers, if we are uncharitably disposed, what are they other than demonstrations of egregious impudence and folly? For how can we with any face presume to ask any thing from God, when we deny him requesting a small matter from us? How can we with any reason expect any mercy from him, when we vouchsafe not to show any mercy for his sake? Can we imagine that God will hearken unto, or mind our petitions, when we are deaf to his intreaties, and regardless of his desires? No: 'Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.' 'Tis his declaration to such bold and unreasonable petitioners, 'When you spread forth your hands, I will not hear you; when you make many prayers, I will not hear.' No importunity, no frequency of prayers will move God in such a case; the needy man's cries and complaints will drown their noise; his sighs and groans will obstruct their passage, and stop the ears of God against them. Likewise all our semblances of repentance, all our corporal abstinences and austerities, if a kind and merciful disposition are wanting, what are they truly but presumptuous dallyings, or impertinent triflings with God? For do we not grossly collude with sin, when we restrain the sensual appetites of the body, but foment the soul's more unreasonable desires: when we curb our wanton flesh, and give licence to a base spirit? Do we not palpably baffle, when in respect to God we pretend to deny ourselves, yet on urgent occasion allow him nothing? Do we not strangely prevaricate, when we would seem to appease God's anger, and purchase his favor by our submissions, yet refuse to do that which he declares most pleasing to him, and most necessary to those purposes? It is an ordinary thing for men thus to serve God, and thus to delude themselves: 'I have known many,' saith St. Basil, 'who have fasted, and prayed, and groaned, and expressed all kind of costless piety, who yet would not part with one doit to the afflicted.' Such a cheap and easy piety, which costs us little or nothing, can surely not be worth much; and we must not conceit, that the all-wise God ('the God of knowlege, by whom actions are weighed,' as Anna sang, and who 'weigheth the spirits' also, as the wise man saith) will be cheated therewith, or take it for more than its

just value. No; he hath expressly signified that he hath not chosen such services, nor doth take any pleasure in them: he hath called them 'vain and impertinent oblations;' not sweet or acceptable, but abominable and troublesome to him, such as he cannot away with, and is weary to bear. 'Tis religious liberality that doth prove us to be serious and earnest in other religious performances; which assures that we value matters of piety at a considerable rate; which gives a substance and solidity to our devotion; which sanctifies our fasts, and verifies our penances; which renders our praises real, and our prayers effectual; so that these being combined, we may reasonably expect acceptance and recompense; and in effect to hear that from God, which by him was returned to good Cornelius, 'Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.'

5. The conscionable practice of these duties doth plainly spring from those good dispositions of mind regarding God, which are the original grounds and fountains of all true piety; and the neglect of them issueth from those vicious dispositions which have a peculiar inconsistency with piety, being destructive thereof in the very foundation and root. Faith in God is the fundamental grace on which piety is grounded; love and fear of God are the radical principles from which it grows: all which as the charitable man discovers in his practice, so they are apparently banished from the heart of the illiberal and unmerciful person.

As for faith, the good man, in showing bounty, exerciseth the chief act thereof; he freely parteth with his goods, because he trusteth on God's providence more than them, and believeth God more ready to help him, than any creature can do, in his need; because he is persuaded that God is most good and benign, so as never to suffer him to be oppressed with want; because he taketh God to be just and faithful, who, having charged him 'to care for nothing,' but 'to cast his care and burden on the Lord,' having promised to care for him, to sustain him, never to leave or forsake him, having also engaged himself to repay and recompense him for what he giveth to his poor neighbor, will not fail to make good his word; because he thinks God abundantly solvent, and himself never the poorer

for laying out in his behalf; because, in short, he is content to live in a dependence on God, and at his disposal. It is mentioned by the Apostle to the Hebrews, as a special instance of a resolute and constant faith in the first Christians, that 'they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' He that not forcibly by the violent rapacity of others, but voluntarily by his own free resignation for the service of God, delivereth them up with the same alacrity, opinion, and hope, thereby demonstrates the same faith. But the gripple wretch, who will bestow nothing on his poor brother for God's sake, is evidently an infidel, having none at all, or very heathenish conceits of God. He must be either a mere atheist, disbelieving the existence of God; or an epicurean, in his heart denying God's providence over human affairs; (for did he conceive God to have any regard unto, or any influence over what passes here, how could he be afraid of wanting on this score? how could he repose any confidence in these possessions? how could he think himself secure in such a neglect or defiance of God?) or he must be exceedingly profane, entertaining most dishonorable and injurious apprehensions of God. He cannot but imagine God very unkind, not only in neglecting men that want his help, but in making them to suffer for spending on his account; very unjust, in not repaying what he borrows; very unfaithful, in breaking his word; very deceitful, in gulling us of our things by fair promises of restitution and requital: or he must apprehend God forgetful of what we do, and himself says; or that he is needy and impotent, not having wherewith to make satisfaction, not being able to make good what he pretends. He must in his conceit debase God even beneath the vilest creatures, thinking a senseless lump of clay more apt in his need to help him, than God can be with all his power and care; supposing his money safer in his own coffers than in God's hands, and that iron bars will guard it more surely than divine protection; esteeming his neighbor's bond for much better security than God's word, and that a mortal man is far more able or more true than the eternal God. He certainly cannot think one word true that God says, being loth to trust him for a penny, for a piece of bread, or for an old

garment. All God's promises of recompense, and threatenings of punishment, he takes for idle fictions: heaven and hell are but Utopias in his conceit; the joys of one, offered to the charitable person, are but pleasant fancies; the torments of the other, denounced to the uncharitable, but fearful dreams. All other things are but names; money and lands are the only real things unto him: all the happiness he can conceive or wish is contained in bags and barns; these are the sole points of his faith, and objects of his confidence. 'He makes gold his hope, and saith to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence. He rejoices because his wealth is great, and because his hand hath gotten much,' as Job speaketh, disclaiming that practice in himself, and tacitly charging it on the persons we speak of. He doth, in fine, affect a total independency on God, and cares to have no dealing with him; he would trust to himself, and live on his own estate: so gross infidelity, and horrible profaneness of mind, lie couched under this sort of vices.

As for the love of God, the liberal man declares it, in that for God's sake he is willing to part with any thing, that he values God's love and favor above all other goods; that he deems himself rich and happy enough in the enjoyment of God. But, 'Who hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' saith St. John: that is, it is impossible he should love God; 'tis a vain conceit to think he does; 'tis a frivolous thing for him to pretend it. For how possibly can he bear in his heart any affection to God, who will not for his sake, and at his instance, part with a little worthless trash and dirty pelf? who prizes so inconsiderable matters beyond God's favor and friendship? who prefers the keeping of his wealth before the enjoyment of God; and chooses rather certainly to quit his whole interest in God, than to adventure a small parcel of his estate with God? His practice indeed sufficiently discovers that his hard and stupid heart is uncapable of any love, except of a corrupt, inordinate, and fond love, or dotage toward himself, since so present and sensible objects cannot affect him. 'He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?'

And as to the fear and reverence of God, the liberal man

expresses it in submission to God's commands, although with his own present seeming diminution and loss; in preferring the discharging of his conscience before the retaining his money; in casting overboard his temporal goods, that he may secure his spiritual and eternal concernments. He can say (his practice attesting to his profession) with David, 'I love thy commandments above gold;' and, 'The law of thy mouth is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver:' he shows that he is 'a man of truth, fearing God, and hating covetousness;' which dispositions, as having much affinity and connexion, are well joined together by Jethro. But the uncharitable man can have little fear of God before his eyes: since the commands of God have no efficacy on his conscience; since he dreads not the effects of divine power and justice, provoked by his disobedience; since he deems an imaginary danger of want from giving, worse than a certain commission of sin in withholding; and is more afraid of penury here, than of damnation hereafter.

The truth is, the covetous or illiberal man is therefore uncapable of being truly pious, because his heart is possessed with vain devotion toward somewhat beside God, which in effect is his sole divinity; he is justly styled an idolater, for that he directs and employs the chief affections of his mind on an idol of clay, which he loves with all his heart and all his soul, which he intirely confides in, which he esteems and worships above all things. It is Mammon, which of all the competitors and antagonists of God, invading God's right, and usurping his place, is (as our Lord intimates) the most dangerous, and desperately repugnant: where he becomes predominant, true religion is quite excluded; 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' Other vicious inclinations combat reason, and often baffle it, but seldom so vanquish it, as that a man doth approve or applaud himself in his miscarriages: but the covetous humor seizeth on our reason itself, and seateth itself therein; inducing it to favor and countenance what is done amiss. The voluptuous man is swayed by the violence of his appetite; but the covetous is seduced by the dictate of his judgment: he therefore scrapes and hoards, and lets go nothing, because he esteems wealth the best thing in the world, and then judges himself most wise when

he is most base. 'Labor not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom,' saith Solomon; intimating the judgment such persons are wont to make of their riches: whence, of all dispositions opposite to piety, this is the most pernicious. But, farther,

6. Let us consider that nothing is more conformable to God's nature, or renders us more like to him, than beneficence and mercy; and that consequently nothing can be more grateful to him: that nothing is more disagreeable and contrary to the essential disposition of God, than illiberality and unmercifulness; and therefore that nothing can be more distasteful to him. What is any being in the world, but an efflux of his bounty, and an argument of his liberality? Look every where about nature, consider the whole tenor of Providence, survey all the works, and scan all the actions of God, you will find them all conspiring in attestation to those sweet characters and elogies which the holy Scripture ascribeth to God, representing him to be 'merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness;' to be 'sorry for evil,' (incident to, or inflicted on any creature,) to 'delight in mercy,' to 'wait that he may be gracious;' styling him the 'God of love, of peace, of hope, of patience, of all grace, and of all consolation, the Father of pities, rich in mercy, and full of bowels;' affirming of him, and by manifold evidences demonstrating, that he is 'benign even unto the ungrateful and evil;' that 'he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.' Nature, I say, Providence, and Revelation, do all concur in testifying this, that there is nothing in God so peculiarly admirable, nothing, as it were, so godlike, that is, so highly venerable and amiable, as to do good and show mercy. We therefore by liberal communication to the needy, do most approach to the nature of God, and most exactly imitate his practice; acquiring to ourselves thereby somewhat of divinity, and becoming little gods to our neighbor. 'Nothing,' saith St. Chrysostom, 'maketh us so near equal to God as beneficence:' and, 'Be,' saith St. Gregory Nazianzen, 'a god to the unfortunate, imitating the mercy of God; for a man hath nothing of God so much as to do good.' That such hath always been the common apprehension of men, the practice of all times showeth, in that men have been ever apt to place their benefactors among

their gods, deferring that love and veneration unto them in degree, which in perfection do appertain to the supreme Benefactor. 'Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful;' so our Saviour proposeth God's mercy to us, both as a pattern directing, and as an argument inducing us to mercifulness: implying it also to be a good sign, declaring us the children of God, the genuine offspring of the all-good and all-merciful Father; yea, that it even renders and constitutes us such, (we thereby coming most truly to represent, and most nearly to resemble him.) Our Lord farther teaches us, saying, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to those that hate you—that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven.' And they who thus are God's children must consequently be very dear to him, and most gracious in his sight; he cannot but greatly like and love himself (the best of himself) in them; he cannot but cherish and treat them well who are the fairest and truest images of himself; no spectacle can be so pleasant to him, as to see us in our practice to act himself, doing good to one another; 'as the elect of God, holy and beloved, putting on bowels of mercies and kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave us;' being 'followers of God as dear children, and walking in love, even as Christ also loved us.' But on the other side, there is not in nature any thing so remotely distant from God, or so extremely opposite to him, as a greedy and griping niggard: hell is scarce so contrary to heaven, as such a man's disposition to the nature of God: for 'tis goodness which sits gloriously triumphant at the top of heaven; and uncharitableness lieth miserably grovelling under the bottom of hell: heaven descends from the one, as its principal cause; hell is built on the other, as its main foundation: as the one approximates the blessed angels to God, and beatifies them; so the other removeth the cursed fiends to such a distance from God and happiness: not to wish, not to do any good, is that which renders them both so bad, and so wretched; and whoever in his conditions is so like to them, and in his practice so agrees with them, cannot but also be very odious to God, and extremely unhappy. God cannot but abhor so base a degeneration from his likeness in those who by

nature are his children, and should be farther such according to his gracious design; neither can any thing more offend his eyes, than seeing them to use one another unkindly. So that if obtaining the certain favor of the great God, with all the benefits attending it, seem considerable to us; or if we think it advisable to shun his displeasure, with its sad effects; it concerns us to practise these duties. So I conclude that sort of considerations, enforcing these duties, which more immediately regard God.

[*Third Head of Discourse.*] Farther, before we deny our relief to our poor neighbor, let us with the eyes of our mind look on him, and attentively consider who he is, what he is in himself, and what he is in relation unto us. [' The righteous considereth the cause of the poor; but the wicked regardeth not to know it:' Prov. xxxix. 7. ' Blessed is he that considereth the poor:' Psal. xli. 1.]

1. He whose need craves our bounty, whose misery demands our mercy, what is he? He is not truly so mean and sorry a thing, as the disguise of misfortune, under which he appears, doth represent him. He who looks so deformedly and dismally, who to outward sight is so ill bestead, and so pitifully accoutred, hath latent in him much of admirable beauty and glory. He within himself containeth a nature very excellent; an immortal soul, and an intelligent mind, by which he nearly resembleth God himself, and is comparable to angels: he invisibly is owner of endowments, rendering him capable of the greatest and best things. What are money and lands? What are silk and fine linen? What are horses and hounds, in comparison to reason, to wisdom, to virtue, to religion, which he hath, or (in despite of all misfortune) he may have if he please? He whom you behold so dejectedly sneaking, in so despicable a garb, so destitute of all convenience and comfort, (lying in the dust, naked, or clad with rags, meagre with hunger or pain,) he comes of a most high and heavenly extraction: he was born a prince, the son of the greatest King eternal; he can truly call the sovereign Lord of all the world his father, having derived his soul from the mouth, having had his body formed by the hands of God himself. (In this, ' the rich and poor,' as the wise man saith, ' do meet together; the Lord

is the maker of them all.') That same forlorn wretch, whom we are so apt to despise and trample on, was framed and constituted lord of the visible world; had all the goodly brightnesses of heaven, and all the costly furnitures of earth created to serve him. ('Thou madest him,' saith the psalmist of man, 'to have dominion over the works of thine hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.') Yea, he was made an inhabitant of paradise, and possessor of felicities superlative; had immortal life and endless joy in his hand, did enjoy the intire favor and friendship of the Most High. Such in worth of nature and nobleness of birth he is, as a man; and highly more considerable he is, as a Christian. For, as vile and contemptible as he looks, God hath so regarded and prized him, as for his sake to descend from heaven, to clothe himself with flesh, to assume the form of a servant; for his good to undertake and undergo the greatest inconveniences, infirmities, wants, and disgraces, the most grievous troubles and most sharp pains incident to mortal nature. God hath adopted him to be his child; the Son of God hath deigned to call him brother: he is a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost, a free denizen of the heavenly city, an heir of salvation, and candidate of eternal glory. The greatest and richest personage is not capable of better privileges than God hath granted him, or of higher preferments than God hath designed him to. He equally with the mightiest prince is the object of God's especial providence and grace, of his continual regard and care, of his fatherly love and affection; who, as good Elihu saith, 'accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands.' In fine, this poor creature whom thou seest is a man, and a Christian, thine equal, whoever thou art, in nature, and thy peer in condition: I say not, in the uncertain and unstable gifts of fortune, not in this worldly state, which is very inconsiderable; but in gifts vastly more precious, in title to an estate infinitely more rich and excellent. Yea, if thou art vain and proud, be sober and humble; he is thy better, in true dignity much to be preferred before thee, far in real wealth surpassing thee: for, 'better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.'

2. That distinction which thou standest on, and which seemeth so vast between thy poor neighbor and thee, what is it? whence did it come? whither tends it? It is not anywise natural, or according to primitive design: for as all men are in faculties and endowments of nature equal, so were they all originally equal in condition, all wealthy and happy, all constituted in a most prosperous and plentiful estate; all things at first were promiscuously exposed to the use and enjoyment of all, every one from the common stock assuming as his own what he needed. Inequality and private interest in things (together with sicknesses and pains, together with all other infelicities and inconveniences) were the by-blows of our fall: sin introduced these degrees and distances; it devised the names of rich and poor; it begot these ingrossings and inclosures of things; it forged those two small pestilent words, *meum* and *tuum*, which have engendered so much strife among men, and created so much mischief in the world: these preternatural distinctions were, I say, brooded by our fault, and are in great part fostered and maintained thereby; for were we generally so good, so just, so charitable as we should be, they could hardly subsist, especially in that measure they do. God indeed (for promoting some good ends, and for prevention of some mischiefs, apt to spring from our ill-nature in this our lapsed state; particularly to prevent the strife and disorder which scrambling would cause among men, presuming on equal right and parity of force) doth suffer them in some manner to continue, and enjoins us a contented submission to them: but we mistake, if we think that natural equality and community are in effect quite taken away; or that all the world is so cantonized among some few, that the rest have no share therein. No; every man hath still a competent patrimony due to him, and a sufficient provision made for his tolerable subsistence. God hath brought no man hither to be necessarily starved, or pinched with extreme want; but hath assigned to every one a child's portion, in some fair way to be obtained by him, either by legal right or by humble request, which according to conscience ought to have effect. No man therefore is allowed to detain, or to destroy superfluously what another man apparently wants; but is obliged to impart it to him: so that rich men are indeed but the treasurers, the

stewards, the caterers of God for the rest of men, having a strict charge to 'dispense unto every one his meat in due season,' and no just privilege to withhold it from any: the honor of distribution is conferred on them, as a reward of their fidelity and care; the right of enjoyment is reserved to the poor, as a provision for their necessity. Thus hath God wisely projected, that all his children should both effectually and quietly be provided for, and that none of them should be oppressed with penury; so that, as St. Paul hath it, 'one man's abundance shall supply another man's want, that there may be an equality:' for since no man can enjoy more than he needs, and every man should have so much as he needs, there can be really no great inequality among men; the distinction will scarce remain otherwhere than in fancy. What the philosopher said of himself, 'What I have is so mine, that it is every man's,' is according to the practice of each man, who is truly and in due measure charitable; whereby that seemingly enormous discrimination among men is well moderated, and the equity of divine Providence is vindicated. But he that ravenously grasps for more than he can well use, and gripes it fast into his clutches, so that the needy in their distress cannot come by it, doth pervert that equity which God hath established in things, defeats his good intention, (so far as he can,) and brings a scandal on his providence: and so doing is highly both injurious and impious.

3. It was also (which we should consider) even one main end of this difference among us, permitted and ordered by God's providence, that as some men's industry and patience might be exercised by their poverty, so other men by their wealth should have ability of practising justice and charity; that so both rich and poor might thence become capable of recompenses, suitable to the worth of such virtuous performances. 'Why art thou rich,' saith St. Basil, 'and he poor? Surely for this; that thou mayest attain the reward of benignity, and faithful dispensation; and that he may be honored with the great prize of patience.' God, in making thee rich, would have thee to be a double benefactor, not only to thy poor neighbor, but also to thyself, whilst thou bestowest relief on him, purchasing a reward to thyself. God also by this order of things designs

that a charitable intercourse should be maintained among men, mutually pleasant and beneficial; the rich kindly obliging the poor, and the poor gratefully serving the rich. Wherefore by neglecting these duties we unadvisedly cross the good purpose of God toward us, depriving ourselves of the chief advantages our wealth may afford.

4. We should also do well to consider that a poor man, even as such, is not to be disregarded, and that poverty is no such contemptible thing as we may be prone to imagine. There are considerations which may qualify poverty even to dispute the place with wealth, and to claim precedence to it. If the world vulgarly doth account and call the rich man happy, a better author hath pronounced the poor man such: 'blessed are the poor,' doth march in the van of the beatitudes; and a reason goeth along therewith, which asserteth its right to the place, 'for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;' for that they are not only in an equal capacity as men, but in a nearer disposition as poor, to the acquisition of that blissful state; for that poverty (the mistress of sobriety and honest industry, the mother of humility and patience, the nurse of all virtue) renders men more willing to go, and more expedite in the way toward heaven: by it also we conform to the Son of God himself, the heir of eternal majesty, the Saviour of the world, 'who for our sake became poor,' (δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, for our sake became a beggar,) 'that we through his poverty (or beggary) might become rich:' he willingly chose, he especially dignified and sanctified that depth of poverty, which we so proudly slight and loathe. The greatest princes and potentates in the world, the most wealthy and haughty of us all, but for one poor beggar had been irrecoverably miserable: to poverty it is, that every one of us doth owe all the possibility there is, all the hopes we can have of our salvation; and shall we then ingratefully requite it with scorn, or with pitiless neglect? Shall we presume, in the person of any poor man, to abhor or contemn the very poor, but most holy and most happy JESUS, our Lord and Redeemer? No; if we will do poverty right, we must rather for his dear sake and memory defer an especial respect and veneration thereto.

5. Thus a due reflexion on the poor man himself, his nature and state, will induce us to succor. But let us also consider him as related unto ourselves: every such person is our near kinsman, is our brother, is by indissoluble bands of cognation in blood, and agreement in nature, knit and united to us. We are all but several streams issuing from one source, several twigs sprouting from one stock; 'one blood,' derived through several channels; one substance, by miraculous efficacy of the divine benediction multiplied or dilated unto several times and places. We are all fashioned according to the same original idea, resembling God, our common Father; we are all endowed with the same faculties, inclinations, and affections; we all conspire in the same essential ingredients of our constitution, and in the more notable adjuncts thereof: it is only some inconsiderable accidents (such as age, place, figure, stature, color, garb) which diversify and distinguish us; in which, according to successions of time and chance, we commonly no less differ from ourselves, than we do at present from them: so that in effect and reasonable esteem, every man is not only our brother, but (as Aristotle saith of a friend) ἄλλος αὐτὸς, 'another one's self;' is not only our most lively image, but in a manner our very substance; another ourself under a small variation of present circumstances: the most of distinction between us and our poor neighbor consists in exterior show, in moveable attire, in casual appendages to the nature of man; so that really when we use him well, we are kind to ourselves; when we yield him courteous regard, we bear respect to our own nature; when we feed and comfort him, we do sustain and cherish a member of our own body. But when we are cruel or harsh to him, we abuse ourselves; when we scorn him, we lay disparagement and disgrace on mankind itself; when we withhold succor or sustenance from him, we do, as the prophet speaketh, 'hide ourselves from our own flesh;' we starve a part of our own body, and wither a branch of our stock; immoderate selfishness so blindeth us, that we oversee and forget ourselves: it is in this, as it is in other good senses, true what the wise man saith, 'The merciful man doth good to his own soul; but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.'

6. Farther, as the poor man is so nearly allied to us by society of common nature, so is he more strictly joined to us by the bands of spiritual consanguinity. All Christians (high and low, rich and poor) are children of the same heavenly Father, spring from the same incorruptible seed, are regenerated to the same lively hope, are coheirs of the same heavenly inheritance; are all members of one body, ('members,' saith St. Paul, 'one of another,') and animated by one holy Spirit; which relation, as it is the most noble and most close that can be, so it should breed the greatest endearments, and should express itself in correspondent effects: it should render us full of affection and sympathy one toward another; it should make us to tender the needs, and feel the sufferings of any Christian as our own; it should dispose us freely to communicate whatever we have, how precious soever, to any of our brethren; this holy friendship should establish a charitable equality and community among us, both in point of honor and of estate: for since all things considerable are common unto us, since we are all purchased and purified by the same precious blood, since we all partake of the same precious faith, of the same high calling, of the same honorable privileges, of the same glorious promises and hopes; since we all have the same Lord and Saviour; why should these secular trifles be so private and particular among us? Why should not so huge a parity in those only valuable things not wholly (I say, not in worldly state or outward appearance, such as the preservation of order in secular affairs requireth, but) in our opinion and affection extinguish that slight distinction of rich and poor, in concernments temporal? How can we slight so noble, so great a personage as a Christian, for wanting a little dross? How can we deem ourselves much his superior, on so petty an advantage, for having that which is not worth speaking or thinking of, in comparison to what he enjoyeth? Our Lord himself is not ashamed to call the least among us his brother and his friend: and shall we then disdain to yield to such an one the regard and treatment suitable to such a quality? Shall we not honor any brother of our Lord? Shall we not be civil and kind to any friend of his? If we do not, how can we pretend to bear any true respect or affection unto him-

self? It is his express precept, that the greatest among us should, in imitation of his most humble and charitable self, be ready to serve the meanest; and that we should 'in honor prefer one another,' and 'in lowliness of mind esteem others better than ourselves,' are apostolical rules, extending indifferently to rich and poor, which are plainly violated by disregarding the poor. Yea, this relation should, according to St. John's doctrine, dispose us not only freely to impart these temporal goods, but even, if occasion be, willingly to expose our very lives for our brethren; 'Hereby,' saith he, 'we perceive the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren.' How greatly then are they deficient from their duty, how little in truth are they Christians, who are unwilling to part with the very superfluities and excrements of their fortune for the relief of a poor Christian! Thus considering our brother, may breed in us charitable dispositions toward him, and induce us to the practice of these duties.

[*Fourth Head of Discourse.*] Moreover, if we reflect on ourselves, and consider either our nature, or our state here, we cannot but observe many strong engagements to the same practice.

1. The very constitution, frame, and temper of our nature directeth and inclineth us thereto; whence, by observing those duties, we observe our own nature, we improve it, we advance it to the best perfection it is capable of; by neglecting them, we thwart, we impair, we debase the same—*hæc nostri pars optima sensus;* the best of our natural inclinations (those sacred relics of God's image originally stamped on our minds) do sensibly prompt, and vehemently urge us to mercy and pity: the very same bowels, which in our own want do by a lively sense of pain inform us thereof, and instigate us to provide for its relief, do also grievously resent the distresses of another, admonishing us thereby, and provoking us to yield him succor. Such is the natural sympathy between men, (discernible in all, but appearing most vigorous in the best natures,) that we cannot see, cannot hear of, yea, can hardly imagine the calamities of other men, without being somewhat disturbed and afflicted ourselves. As also nature, to the acts requisite toward pre-

servation of our life, hath annexed a sensible pleasure, forcibly enticing us to the performance of them: so hath she made the communication of benefits to others to be accompanied with a very delicious relish on the mind of him that practises it; nothing indeed carrying with it a more pure and savory delight than beneficence. A man may be virtuously voluptuous, and a laudable epicure by doing much good; for to receive good, even in the judgment of Epicurus himself, (the great patron of pleasure,) is nowise so pleasant as to do it: God and nature therefore within us do solicit the poor man's case: even our own ease and satisfaction demand from us compassion and kindness towards him; by exercising them, we hearken to nature's wise disciplines, and comply with her kindly instincts: we cherish good humor, and sweeten our complexion; so ennobling our minds, we become not only more like to God, but more perfectly men: by the contrary practice we rebel against the laws, and pervert the due course of our nature; we do weaken, corrupt, and stifle that which is best in us; we harden and stupify our souls; so monstrously degenerating from the perfection of our kind, and becoming rather like savage beasts than sociable men; yea, somewhat worse perhaps than many beasts; for commonly brutes will combine to the succor of one another, they will defend and help those of the same kind.

2. And if the sensitive part within us doth suggest so much, the rational dictates more unto us: that heavenly faculty, having capacities so wide, and so mighty energies, was surely not created to serve mean or narrow designs; it was not given us to scrape eternally in earth, or to amass heaps of clay for private enjoyment; for the service of one puisne creature, for the sustenance or satisfaction of a single carcass: it is much below an intelligent person to weary himself with servile toils, and distract his mind with ignoble cares, for concernments so low and scanty: but to regard and pursue the common good of men; to dispense, advise, and aid, where need requires; to diffuse its virtue all about in beneficial effects; these are operations worthy of reason, these are employments congruous to the native excellency of that divine power implanted in us;

such performances declare indeed what a man is, whence he sprang, and whither he tends.

3. Farther, examining ourselves, we may also observe that we are in reality, what our poor neighbor appears to be, in many respects no less indigent and impotent than he: we no less, yea far more, for our subsistence depend on the arbitrary power of another, than he seemeth to rely on ours. We as defectible creatures do continually want support; we as grievous sinners do always need mercy; every moment we are contracting huge debts, far beyond our ability to discharge; debts of gratitude for benefits received, debts of guilt for offences committed; we therefore perpetually stand obliged to be craving for mercy and relief at the gates of heaven. We all, from prince to peasant, live merely on alms, and are most really in condition beggars: 'to pray always' is a duty incumbent on us from the condition of our nature, as well as by the command of God. Such a likeness in state should therefore dispose us to succor our fellows, and, *δανείζειν Θεῷ ἔλεον ἐλέου χοῄζοντας*, 'to lend mercy to God, who need mercy from him,' as the good Father [Greg. Naz.] speaketh. We should, as the Apostle advises and argues, 'remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body;' as being companions in necessity, or subject to the like distress. If we daily receive mercy and relief, yet, unmindful of our obligation to God, refuse them to others, shall we not deserve to hear that dreadful exprobration, 'O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?'

4. The great incertainty and instability of our condition doth also require our consideration. We, that now florish in a fair and full estate, may soon be in the case of that poor creature, who now sues for our relief; we, that this day enjoy the wealth of Job, may the morrow need his patience: there are Sabeans, which may come, and drive away our cattle; there are tempests, which may arise, and smite down our houses; there is a fire of God, which may fall from heaven, and consume our substance; a messenger of all these mischiefs may, for all we

know, be presently at our doors; it happened so to a better man than we, as unexpectedly, and with as small ground to fear it, as it can arrive to us: all our wealth is surrounded with dangers, and exposed to casualties innumerable: violence may snatch it from us, treachery may cheat us of it; mischance may seize thereon, a secret moth may devour it; the wisdom of Providence for our trial, or its justice for our punishment, may bereave us thereof; its own light and fluid nature (if no other accountable causes were apparent) might easily serve to waft it from us; for 'riches,' saith the wise man, 'make themselves wings,' (they, it seems, do need no help for that,) 'and fly away like as an eagle toward heaven;' that is, of their own accord they do swiftly convey themselves away, out of our sight, and beyond our reach; they are but wind: 'what profit,' says the preacher, 'hath he that laboreth for the wind?' For wind; that is, for a thing which can nowise be fixed or settled in one corner; which, therefore, it is a vanity to conceive that we can surely appropriate, or long retain. How then can we think to stand firm on a place so slippery? how can we build any confidence on a bottom so loose and brittle? how can we suffer our minds to be swelled up like bubbles with vain conceit, by the breath of such things, more fleeting and vertiginous than any air? against the precepts of the wisest and best men: 'If riches increase,' saith the psalmist, 'set not your heart on them:' 'Wilt thou set thine eyes on that which is not?' saith the wise man: (that is, wilt thou regard that which is so transitory and evanid, that it hardly may be deemed real; which we can scarce look on, before it is gone?) And, 'Charge them,' saith St. Paul, 'that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches:' (ἐπὶ πλούτου ἀδηλότητι, in the obscurity, or inevidence of riches; things, which we can never plainly discern how long we shall keep them, how much we can enjoy them;) what should make us unwilling, with certain advantages to ourselves, freely to let that go, which presently without our leave may forsake us? How can we reasonably judge our case much different from that of the poorest body, whenas in a trice we may perhaps change places and persons; when, the scene turning, he may be advanced unto our wealth, we may be depressed into his

want? Since every age yieldeth instances of some Crœsus, some Polycrates, some Pompey, some Job, some Nebuchodonosor, who within a small compass of time doth appear to all men the object both of admiration and pity, is to the less wise the mark both of envy and scorn; seeing every day presenteth unexpected vicissitudes, the sea of human affairs continually ebbing and flowing, now rolling on this, now on the other shore, its restless waves of profit and credit; since especially there is a God, who arbitrarily disposeth things, and with a turn of his hand changeth the state of men; who, as the Scripture saith, 'maketh rich and poor, bringeth low, and lifteth up; poureth contempt on princes; raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory:' seeing, I say, apparently such is the condition of things here, that we may soon need his pity and help, who now requesteth ours, why should we not be very ready to afford them to him? Why should we not gladly embrace our opportunity, and use our turn well; becoming aforehand with others, and preventing their reciprocal contempt or neglect of us hereafter: 'Cast thy bread on the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also unto eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be on the earth:' that is, considering the inconstancy and uncertainty of affairs here, and what adversity may befal thee, be liberal on all occasions, and thou shalt (even a good while after) find returns of thy liberality on thee: so the wise man advises, and so wisdom certainly dictates that we should do.

5. And equity doth exact no less: for were any of us in the needy man's plight, (as easily we may be reduced thereto,) we should believe our case deserved commiseration; we should importunately demand relief; we should be grievously displeased at a repulse; we should apprehend ourselves very hardly dealt with, and sadly we should complain of inhumanity and cruelty, if succor were refused to us. In all equity therefore we should be apt to minister the same to others; for nothing can be more unreasonable or unjust, than to require or expect that from another, which in a like case we are unwilling to render unto him: it is a plain deviation from that funda-

mental rule, which is the base of all justice, and virtually the sum, as our Saviour telleth us, of whatever is prescribed us: 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.' I add, that on these considerations, by unmerciful dealing, we put ourselves into a very bad and ticklish condition, wholly depending on the constancy of that which is most inconstant; so that if our fortune do fail, we can neither reasonably hope for, nor justly pretend to, any relief or comfort from others: 'He that doeth good turns is mindful of that which may come hereafter; and when he falleth, he shall find a stay.'

6. We should also remember concerning ourselves, that we are mortal and frail. Were we immortal, or could we probably retain our possessions for ever in our hands; yea, could we foresee some definite space of time, considerably long, in which we might assuredly enjoy our stores, it might seem somewhat excusable to scrape hard, and to hold fast; to do so might look like rational providence: but since 'riches are not for ever, nor doth the crown endure to all generations,' as the wise man speaketh; since they must infallibly be soon left, and there is no certainty of keeping them for any time, it is very unaccountable why we should so greedily seek them, and hug them so fondly. 'The rich man,' saith St. James, 'as the flower of the grass, shall pass away;' it is his special doom to fade away suddenly; it is obvious why in many respects he is somewhat more than others obnoxious to the fatal stroke, and on special accounts of justice he may be farther more exposed thereto: considering the case of the rich fool in the gospel, we may easily discern them; we should reckon that it may happen to us as it did there to him; that after we have reared great barns, and 'stored up much goods for many years,' our 'soul this very night may be required of us:' however, if it be uncertain when, it is most certain that after a very short time our thread will be spun out; then shall we be rifled, and quite stript of all; becoming stark-naked as when we came into the world: we shall not carry with us one grain of our glistering metals, or one rag of our gaudy stuff; our stately houses, our fine gardens, and our spacious walks, must all be exchanged for a close hole under ground; we must for ever bid

farewell to our pomps and magnificences, to our feasts and jollities, to our sports and pastimes; not one of all our numerous and splendid retinue, no companion of our pleasure, no admirer of our fortune, no flatterer of our vices, can wait on us; desolate and unattended we must go down to the chambers of darkness: then shall we find that to die rich, as men are wont improperly to speak, is really to die most poor; that to have carefully kept our money is to have lost it utterly; that by leaving much, we do indeed leave worse than nothing: to have been wealthy, if we have been illiberal and unmerciful, will be no advantage or satisfaction to us after we are gone hence; yea, it will be the cause of huge damage and bitter regret unto us. All our treasures will not procure us any favor, or purchase one advocate for us in that impartial world; yea, it shall be they which will there prosecute us with clamorous accusations, will bear sore testimony against us, ('The rust of them, saith St. James, 'shall be a witness against us,' signifying our unjust or uncharitable detention of them,) will obtain a most heavy sentence on us; they will render our audit more difficult, and inflame our reckoning; they will aggravate the guilt of our sins with imputations of unfaithfulness and ingratitude; so with their load they will press us deeper into perdition: to omit, that having so ill managed them, we shall leave them behind us as marks of obloquy, and monuments of infamy on our memories; for ordinarily of such a rich person it is true, that Job says of him, 'Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place;' like one who departs from off this stage, after having very ill acted his part. Is it not therefore infinitely better to prevent this being necessarily and unprofitably deprived of our goods, by seasonably disposing them so as may conduce to our benefit, and our comfort, and our honor; being very indifferent and unconcerned in our affection toward them; modest and humble in our conceits about them; moderate and sober in our enjoyments of them; contented on any reasonable occasion to lose or leave them; and especially most ready to dispense them in that best way, which God hath prescribed, according to the exigencies of humanity and charity? By thus ordering our riches, we shall render them benefits and blessings to us; we shall by them procure sure friend-

ship and favor, great worship and respect in the other world; having so lived, (in the exercise of bounty and mercy,) we shall truly die rich, and in effect carry all our goods along with us, or rather we have thereby sent them before us; having, like wise merchants, transmitted and drawn them by a most false conveyance into our country and home; where infallibly we shall find them, and with everlasting content enjoy them. So considering ourselves, and our state, will dispose us to the practice of these duties.

[*Fifth Head of Discourse.*] Furthermore, if we contemplate our wealth itself, we may therein descry great motives to bounty.

1. Thus to employ our riches is really the best use they are capable of; not only the most innocent, most worthy, most plausible, but the most safe, most pleasant, most advantageous, and consequently in all respects most prudent way of disposing them. To keep them close without using or enjoying them at all, is a most sottish extravagance, or a strange kind of madness; a man thence affecting to be rich quite impoverisheth himself, dispossesseth himself of all, and alienateth from himself his estate: his gold is no more his than when it was in the Indies, or lay hid in the mines; his corn is no more his than if it stood growing in Arabia or China; he is no more owner of his lands than he is master of Jerusalem, or Grand Cairo: for what difference is there, whether distance of place, or baseness of mind, sever things from him? whether his own heart, or another man's hand, detain them from his use? whether he hath them not at all, or hath them to no purpose? whether one is a beggar out of necessity or by choice? is pressed to want, or a volunteer thereto? Such an one may fancy himself rich, and others as wise as himself may repute him so: but so distracted persons to themselves, and to one another, do seem great princes, and style themselves such; with as much reason almost he might pretend to be wise, or to be good. Riches are, χρήματα, things, whose nature consists in usefulness; abstract that, they become nothing, things of no consideration or value; he that hath them is no more concerned in them than he that hath them not: it is the art and skill to use affluence of things wisely and nobly, which makes it wealth, and constitutes him

rich that hath it; otherwise the chests may be crammed, and the barns stuffed full, while the man is miserably poor and beggarly: it is in this sense true, which the wise man says, 'There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing.' But the very having riches (will such a man say) is matter of reputation; men do esteem and honor him that hath them. True, if he knows how, and hath the mind to use them well: otherwise all the credit they yield consists in making their master ridiculous to wise men, and infamous among all men. But, putting case that any should be so foolish as to respect us merely for seeming rich, why should we accommodate our practice to their vain opinion, or be base ourselves, because others are not wise? But, however, (may he say again,) it is a pleasant thing to see them; a heap of gold is the most lovely spectacle that one can behold; it does a man's heart good to view an abundance of good things about him. For this plea, indeed, he hath a good author: this, it should seem, was all the benefit the wise man observed in them, accruing to such persons: 'What good,' saith he, 'is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?' But if this be all they are good for, it is, one would think, a very slim benefit they afford, little able to balance the pain and care requisite to the acquist and custody of them; a benefit indeed not proper to the possessor; for any one may look on them as well as he, or on the like; any one at pleasure may enjoy better sights; all the riches and ornaments of nature, the glorious splendors of heaven, and the sweet beauties of the field, are exposed to common view; the choicest magnificences and gallantries of the world do studiously present themselves to every man's eye; these in part every man truly may appropriate to himself; and by imagination any man can as well take all that he sees for his own, as the tenacious miser doth fancy his dear pelf to be his.

But mine heir (perhaps he will farther say) will thank me, will praise me, will bless me for my great care and providence: if he doth, what is that to thee? Nothing of that will concern thee, or can reach thee; thou shalt not hear what he says, or feel any good from what he does: and most probably thou art mistaken in thy opinion concerning him; as thou knowest

not who he shall be, 'that shall gather all thou heapest up,' or 'shall rule over all thy labor,' ('whether he shall be a wise man, or a fool,' a kinsman or a stranger, a friend or a foe,) so thou canst as little guess what he will think or say: if he hath wit, he may sweetly laugh at thee for thy fond wisdom; if he hath none, his commendations will little adorn thy memory; he will to thy disgrace spend what thou leavest, as vainly as thou didst get or keep it. But (this to be sure he will in the end say for himself) money is a good reserve against necessary occasions, or bad times that may come; against a time of old age, of sickness, of adversity; it is the surest friend a man can have in such cases, which, when all fails, will be ready to help him: 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city:' the wise man he thinks never spake more wisely; he therefore will not dismantle this fortress, but will keep it well stored, letting therefore his wealth lie dead and useless by him. But (to let pass now the profane infidelity of this plea, excluding all hope in God, and substituting our providence in the room of his) what a folly is it thus to anticipate evil, and to create to ourselves a present adversity from a suspicion of one future; to pinch ourselves now, lest we should suffer hereafter; to pine to-day, because we can imagine it possible that we may starve to-morrow; to forego certain occasions of enjoying our goods, for that perchance the like occasions may happen one day, we know not when; not to use things now, when reason bids us, because they may be useful at another time! Not considering also, that many intervenient accidents, more probably than a moderate and handsome use of our wealth, may crop the excrescences thereof.

2. But setting aside these absurd excuses of penuriousness, we may consider that, secluding the good use of them in beneficence, riches are very impertinent, very cumbersome, very dangerous, very mischievous things; either superfluous toys, or troublesome clogs, or treacherous snares, or rather all these in combination, productive of trouble, sorrow, and sin. A small pittance will and must suffice, to all reasonable purposes, to satisfy our necessities, to procure conveniences, to yield innocent delight and ease: our nature doth not require, nor can bear much: ('Take heed and beware of covetousness,' saith

our Lord: 'for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;' that is, a man may live well without it:) all the rest, setting beneficence apart, can only serve vanity or vice, will make us really fools and slaves. ('They that will be rich,' saith the Apostle, 'fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.') They puff up our minds with vain and false conceits; making us, as if we were in a dream or frenzy, to take ourselves for other persons, more great, more wise, more good, more happy than we are; for constantly, as the wise man observed, 'The rich man is wise in his own conceit;' 'Great men are not always wise.' And Agar thus intimates in his prayer, 'Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches.' They render us insensible and forgetful of God, of ourselves, of piety and virtue, of all that is good and worthy of us; ('Lest I be full,' said that good man again, assigning a reason why he deprecated being rich, 'and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord?') they swallow up our thoughts, our affections, our endeavors, our time and leisure, possessing our hearts with a doting love unto them, (excluding other good affections,) distracting our minds with anxious cares about them, (choking other good thoughts,) incumbering all our life with business about them, (inconsistent with due attention to our other more weighty and necessary concernments,) filling our heads with suspicions and fears, piercing our hearts with troubles and sorrows; they immerse our souls in all the follies of pride, in all the filths of luxury, in all the mischiefs emergent from sloth and stupidity; they are 'the root of all evils' unto us, and the greatest obstructions of our true happiness, rendering salvation almost impossible, and heaven in a manner inaccessible to us: so that to be rich (if severed from a sober mind, and a free heart) is a great disease, and the source of many grievous distempers both of body and mind; from which we cannot well otherwise secure or rescue ourselves, than by liberally spending them in works of bounty and mercy: so shall we ease ourselves of the burdens, so shall we elude the temptations, so shall we abandon the vices, and so shall we escape all the sad mischiefs incident to them: thus to use wealth shall turn it into a convenience,

and an ornament of our lives, into a considerable blessing, and a ground of much comfort to us. Excluding this use of wealth, or abstracting a capacity of doing good therewith, nothing is more pitiful and despicable than it; it is but like the load or the trappings of an ass: a wise man on that condition would not choose it, or endure to be pestered with it; but would serve it as those philosophers did, who flung it away, that it might not disturb their contemplations: 'tis the power it affords of benefiting men, which only can season and ingratiate it to the relish of such a person: otherwise it is evidently true, which the wise man affirms: Prov. xv. 16. 'Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and trouble therewith.'

3. Again, we may consider that to dispense our wealth liberally is the best way to preserve it, and to continue masters thereof; what we give is not thrown away, but saved from danger: while we detain it at home (as it seems to us) it really is abroad and at adventures; it is out at sea, sailing perilously in storms, near rocks and shelves, amongst pirates; nor can it ever be safe, till it is brought into this port, or insured this way: when we have bestowed it on the poor, then we have lodged it in unquestionable safety; in a place where no rapine, no deceit, no mishap, no corruption can ever by any means come at it. All our doors and bars, all our forces and guards, all the circumspection and vigilancy we can use, are no defence or security at all in comparison to this disposal thereof: the poor man's stomach is a granary for our corn, which never can be exhausted; the poor man's back is a wardrobe for our clothes, which never can be pillaged; the poor man's pocket is a bank for our money, which never can disappoint or deceive us: all the rich traders in the world may decay and break; but the poor man can never fail, except God himself turn bankrupt; for what we give to the poor, we deliver and intrust in his hands, out of which no force can wring it, no craft can filch it; it is laid up in heaven, whither no thief can climb, where no moth or rust do abide. In despite of all the fortune, of all the might, of all the malice in the world, the liberal man will ever be rich: for God's providence is his estate; God's wisdom and power are his defence; God's love and favor are his reward; God's

word is his assurance; who hath said it, that 'he which giveth to the poor shall not lack:' no vicissitude therefore of things can surprise him, or find him unfurnished; no disaster can impoverish him; no adversity can overwhelm him; he hath a certain reserve against all times and occasions: he that 'deviseth liberal things, by liberal things shall he stand,' saith the prophet. But, on the other hand, being niggardly is the likeliest course we can take to lose our wealth and estate; we thereby expose them to danger, and leave them defenceless; we subject them to the envious eye, to the slanderous tongue, to the ravenous and insidious hand; we deprive them of divine protection, which if it be away, 'the watchman waketh but in vain:' we provoke God irrecoverably to take it from us, as he did the talent from that unprofitable servant, who did not use it well. We do indeed thereby yield God just cause of war and enmity against us; which being, *omnia dat qui justa negat;* we do forfeit all to divine justice, by denying that portion which belongs to him, and which he claims. Can we hope to live in quiet possession of any thing, if we refuse to pay our due tributes and taxes imposed on us by our almighty Sovereign; if we live in such rebellion against his authority, such violation of his right, such diffidence to his word? No: 'He that trusteth in his riches shall fall; but the righteous shall flourish as a branch:' such is the difference between the covetous and the liberal, in point of security and success concerning their estate.

Even according to the human and ordinary way of esteeming things, (abstracting from the special providence of God,) the liberal person hath, in consequence of his bounty, more real security for his wealth, than this world hath any other: he thereby gets an interest in the gratitude and affection of those whom he obligeth, together with the good-will and respect of all men, who are spectators of his virtuous and generous dealing: the hearts and memories of men are repositories to him of a treasure, which nothing can extort from him, or defraud him of. If any mischance should arrive, or any want come near him, all men would be ready to commiserate him, every man would hasten to his succor. As when a haughty, a greedy, or a cripple man do fall into calamity or disgrace, scarce any one

regardeth or pitieth him: fortune, deserting such a person, carries all with it, few or none stick to him; his most zealous flatterers are commonly the first that forsake him; contempt and neglect are the only adherents to his condition; that of the wise man appears verified, 'He that hideth his eyes from the poor shall have many a curse.' So the courteous and bountiful person, when fortune seems to frown on him, hath a sure refuge in the good-will and esteem of men; all men, on the accounts of honor and honesty, take themselves to be concerned in his case, and engaged to favor him; even those who before were strangers become then his friends, and in effect discover their affection to him; it, in the common judgment of people, appears an indignity and a disgrace to mankind, that such a man should want or suffer.

4. Nay farther, we may consider that exercising bounty is the most advantageous method of improving and increasing an estate; but that being tenacious and illiberal, doth tend to the diminution and decay thereof. The way to obtain a great increase is to sow much: he that sows little, how can he expect a good crop? It is as true in spiritual husbandry as it is in others; that 'what a man soweth, that he shall reap,' both in kind and according to proportion: so that great husbandman St. Paul assureth us, 'He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully:' and Solomon means the same when he saith, 'To him that soweth righteousness, shall be a sure reward.' The way to gain abundantly is, you know well, to trade boldly; he that will not adventure any thing considerable, how can he think of a large return? 'Honor the Lord with thy substance, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine:' Prov. iii. 9. 10. 'Tis so likewise in the evangelical negociations; if we put out much on score of conscience or charity, we shall be sure to profit much. Liberality is the most beneficial traffic that can be; it is bringing our wares to the best market; it is letting out our money into the best hands; we thereby lend our money to God, who repays with vast usury; an hundred to one is the rate he allows at present, and above a hundred millions to one he will render hereafter; so that, if you will be merchants this way, you shall be

sure to thrive, you cannot fail to grow rich most easily and speedily: 'The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered himself:' this is that which St. Paul again argues on, when, commending the Philippians' free kindness toward him, he says, 'Not because I desired a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.' Bounty yields καρπὸν πλεονάζοντα, a fruit that multiplies, and abundantly turns to good account; it indeed procuring God's benediction, the fountain of all desirable plenty and prosperity; for, 'The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.' It is therefore the greatest want of policy, the worst ill-husbandry and unthriftiness that can be, to be sparing this way; he that useth it cannot be thriving; he must spend on the main stock, and may be sure to get nothing considerable. God ordinarily so proceeds, as to recompense and retaliate men in the same kind, wherein they endeavor to please him, or presume to offend him; so that for them who freely offer him their goods, he in regard thereto will prosper their dealings, and bless their estates; ('For this very thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto,' says Moses;) but they who will not lay out any thing for him, he will not concern himself in their success otherwise than to cross it, or, which is worse, to curse it; for if he seem to favor them for a time with some prosperity in their affairs, their condition is much worse thereby, their account will be more grievous, and their fate more disastrous in the end.

5. Farther, the contributing part of our goods to the poor will qualify us to enjoy the rest with satisfaction and comfort. The oblation of these first-fruits, as it will sanctify the whole lump of our estate, so it will sweeten it; having offered this well-pleasing sacrifice of piety, having discharged this debt of justice, having paid this tribute of gratitude, our hearts being at rest, and our conscience well satisfied, we shall, like those good people in the Acts, 'eat our meat with gladness and singleness of heart;' to see the poor man by our means accommodated, eased, and refreshed, will give a delicious relish to all our enjoyments. But withholding his portion from the poor, as it will pollute and profane all our estate, so it will render the

fruition thereof sour or unsavory to us: for can we with any content taste our dainties, or view our plenties, while the poor man stands in sight pining with hunger? Can we without regret see our walls clothed with tapestry, our horses decked with golden trappings, our attendants strutting in wanton gaiety, while our honest poor brother appears half naked, and trembling with cold? Can we carry on one finger enough to furnish ten poor people with necessaries, and have the heart within us, without shame and displeasure, to see them want? No; the sense of our impiety and ingratitude toward God, of our inhumanity and unworthiness toward our neighbor, will not fail (if ever we considerately reflect on our behavior) to sting us with cruel remorse and self-condemnation; the clamors of want and misery surrounding us will pierce our ears, and wound our hearts; the frequent objects of pity and mercy, do what we can to banish them from our prospect or regard, will so assail, and so pursue us, as to disturb the freedom of our enjoyments, to quash the briskness of our mirth, to allay the sweetness of our pleasure; yea rather, if stupidity and obduration have not seized on us, to imbitter all unto us; we shall feel that true, which Zophar speaks of the cruel and covetous oppressor, 'Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly,—he shall not rejoice in his substance,—in the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.'

6. I shall touch but one consideration more, persuasive of this practice; it is this: The peculiar nature of our religion specially requires it, and the honor thereof exacts it from us; nothing better suits Christianity, nothing more graces it, than liberality; nothing is more inconsistent therewith, or more disparageth it, than being miserable and sordid. A Christian niggard is the veriest nonsense that can be; for what is a Christian? what, but a man, who adores God alone, who loves God above all things, who reposes all his trust and confidence in God? What is he, but one who undertaketh to imitate the most good and bountiful God; to follow, as the best pattern of his practice, the most benign and charitable JESUS, the Son of God; to obey the laws of God, and his Christ, the sum and substance of which is charity; half whose religion doth consist in loving his neighbor as himself? What is he,

farther, but one who hath renounced this world, with all the vain pomps and pleasures of it; who professes himself in disposition and affection of mind to forsake all things for Christ's sake; who pretends little to value, affect, or care for any thing under heaven; having all his main concernments and treasures, his heart, his hopes, and his happiness, in another world! Such is a Christian. And what is a niggard? All things quite contrary: one, whose practice manifestly shows him to worship another thing beside and before God; to love Mammon above God, and more to confide in it, than in him; one who bears small good-will, kindness, or pity toward his brother; who is little affected or concerned with things future or celestial; whose mind and heart are rivetted to this world; whose hopes and happinesses are settled here below; whose soul is deeply immersed and buried in earth; one who, according to constant habit, notoriously breaketh the two great heads of Christian duty, 'loving God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself;' it is therefore, by comparing those things, very plain, that we pretend to reconcile gross contradictions and inconsistencies, if we profess ourselves to be Christians, and are illiberal. It is indeed the special grace and glory of our religion, that it consisteth not in barren speculations, or empty formalities, or forward professions; not in fancying curiously, or speaking zealously, or looking demurely; but in really producing sensible fruits of goodness; in doing, as St. Paul signifies, 'things good and profitable unto men,' such as those chiefly are, of which we speak. The most gracious wisdom of God hath so modelled our religion, that according to it piety and charity are the same thing; that we can never express ourselves more dutiful toward him, or better please him, or more truly glorify him, than when we are kind and good to our poor brother. We grossly mistake, if we take giving of alms to be a Jewish or Popish practice, suitable to children and dullards in religion, beneath so refined, so improved, so loftily spiritual gallants as we: no, 'tis a duty most properly and most highly Christian, as none more, a most goodly fruit of grace, and a most faithful mark thereof: 'By the experiment of this ministration, we,' as St. Paul saith, 'glorify God for our professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for our liberal distri-

bution unto our brethren and unto all men:' without it our faith is dead and senseless, our high attainments are fond presumptions, our fine notions and delicate spiritualities are in truth but silly dreams, the issues of a proud and ignorant fancy: he that appears hard-hearted and close-fisted towards his needy brother, let him think or call himself what he pleaseth, he plainly is no Christian, but a blemish, a reproach, and a scandal to that honorable name.

7. To all these considerations and reasons inducing to the practice of this kind of charity, I might subjoin examples, and set before you the fairest copies that can be imagined thereof: We have for it the pattern of God himself, who is infinitely munificent and merciful; 'from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth: who giveth life, and breath, and all things unto all;' who 'giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.' We have the example of the Son of God, who out of pure charity did freely part with the riches and glories of eternity, voluntarily embracing extreme poverty and want for our sake, that we who were poor might be enriched, we that were miserable might become happy: who 'went about doing good,' spent all his life in painful dispensation of beneficence, and relieving the needs of men in every kind. We have the blessed patriarchs to follow, who at God's pleasure and call did readily leave their country, their friends, their goods, and all they had. We have the practice of the holy Apostles, who freely 'let go all to follow their Lord;' who cheerfully sustained all sorts of losses, disgraces, and pains, for promoting the honor of God, and procuring good unto men: we have to move and encourage us hereto the first and best Christians, most full of grace and holy zeal, who 'so many as were possessors of lands and houses, did sell them,' and did impart the price of them to the community, 'so that there was none poor among them,' and that 'distribution was made to every one as he had need.' We have all the saints and eminent servants of God in all times, who have been high and wonderful in the performance of these duties. I could tell you of the blessed martyr St. Cyprian, who was liberal by wholesale, bestowing all at once a fair estate on God and the poor; of the renowned bishop St. Basil, who constantly waited on the sick, and kissed their sores; of

the most pious confessor St. Martin, who having but one coat left, and seeing a poor man that wanted clothes, tore it in two pieces, and gave one to that poor man: and many like instances out of authentic history might be produced, apt to provoke our imitation. I might also, to beget emulation and shame in us, represent exemplary practices of humanity and charity even in Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans, (such as in these cold days might pass for more than ordinary among us;) but I shall only propound one present and sensible example; that of this noble city, whose public bounty and charity in all kinds (in education of orphans, in curing the diseased both in body and mind, in provision for the poor, in relieving all sorts of necessities and miseries) let me earnestly entreat and exhort us all for God's sake, as we are able, by our private charity to imitate, to encourage, and to assist; let us do this so much the more willingly and freely, as the sad circumstances of things, by God's judgments brought on us, do plainly require that the public charity itself (lying under so great impediments, discouragements, and distresses) should be supported, supplied, and relieved by particular liberality. No words that I can devise will be so apt to affect and move you, as the case itself, if you please to consider it: hear it therefore speaking, and, I pray, with a pious and charitable disposition of mind attend thereto:

A true report, &c.

For this excellent pattern of pious bounty and mercy, let us heartily thank Almighty God; let us humbly implore God's blessing on the future management of it; let us pay due respects to the worthy promoters thereof, and pray for rewards on them, answerable to their charitable care and industry employed therein; let us also according to our ability perform our duty in following and furthering it: for encouragement to which practice, give me leave briefly to reflect on the latter part of my text; which represents some instances of the felicity proper to a bountiful person, or some rewards peculiar to the exercising the duties of bounty and mercy.

The first is, 'His righteousness endureth for ever.' These words are capable of various senses, or of divers respects; they may import, that the fame and remembrance of his bounty is

very durable, or that the effects thereof do lastingly continue, or that eternal rewards are designed thereto; they may respect the bountiful man himself, or his posterity here; they may simply relate to an endurance in God's regard and care; or they may with that also comprehend a continuance in the good memory and honorable mention of men. Now in truth, according to all these interpretations, the bountiful man's righteousness doth endure for ever, that is, very lastingly, (or so long as the special nature of the case doth bear,) in any sense; or for an absolute perpetuity in some sense: the words in their plenitude do naturally and without straining involve so many truths; none of which therefore we think fit to exclude, but shall briefly touch them all.

1. As for future reputation and fame, (which that it in part is intended here, that which precedes, 'the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance,' doth argue,) it is evident that it peculiarly attends on this practice: the bountiful person is especially that just man, whose 'memory is blessed,' (is μετ' ἐγκωμίων, as the Greek renders it; that is, is prosecuted with commendations and praises.) No spices can so embalm a man, no monument can so preserve his name and memory, as works of beneficence; no other fame is comparably so precious, or truly glorious, as that which grows from thence: the renown of power and prowess, of wit or learning, of any wisdom or skill, may dwell in the fancies of men with some admiration: but the remembrance of bounty reigns in their hearts with cordial esteem and affection; there erecting immovable trophies over death and oblivion, and thence spreading itself through the tongues of men with sincere and sprightly commendations. The bountiful man's very dust is fragrant, and his grave venerable; his name is never mentioned without respect; his actions have always these best echoes, with innumerable iterations resounding after them: 'his goods shall be established, and the congregation shall declare his alms:' Ecclus. xxxii. 11. This was a true friend to mankind; this was a real benefactor to this world; this was a man good in earnest, and pious to good purpose.

2. The effects of his righteousness are likewise very durable: when he is departed hence, and in person is no more seen, he

remains visible and sensible in the footsteps and fruits of his goodness; the poor still beholds him present in the subsistence of himself and his family; the sick man feels him in the refreshment, which he yet enjoys by his provision; he supervives in the heart of the afflicted, which still resents the comfort, and rejoices in the ease, which he procured him; all the world derives benefit from him by the edification it receiveth from his example; religion obtaineth profit and ornament, God himself enjoyeth glory and praise from his righteousness.

3. His righteousness also endureth in respect to his posterity. It is an usual plea for tenacity and parsimony, that care must be had of posterity, that enough must be provided and laid up for the family: but in truth this is a very absurd excuse; and doing according thereto, is a very preposterous method of proceeding toward that end; it is really the greatest improvidence in that respect, and the truest neglect that can be of our children: for so doing, together with a seeming estate, we entail a real curse on them: we divest them of God's protection and benediction, (the only sure preservatives of an estate;) we leave them heirs of nothing so much as of punishments due to our ingratitude, our infidelity, our impiety and injustice both toward God and man: whereas by liberally bestowing on the poor, we demise unto them God's blessing, which is the best inheritance; we recommend them to God's special care, which is the best tuition; we leave them God's protection and providence, which are a wealth indefectible and inexhaustible; we constitute God their guardian, who will most faithfully manage, and most wisely improve their substance, both that which we leave to them, and that which we gave for them to the poor; we thereby in good part entitle them to the rewards appropriate to our pious charity, our faith, our gratitude, our self-denial, our justice, to whatever of good is virtually contained in our acts of bounty; to omit the honor and good-will of men, which constantly adhere to the bountiful man's house and family. Prov. xiii. 22. 'A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children.' It is therefore expressly mentioned in Scripture as a recompense peculiar to this virtue, that security from want and all happiness do attend the posterity of the bountiful person: 'he is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed,' saith David

of him generally: and David also particularly observed that in all the course of his long life he could find no exception to the rule: 'I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.'

4. His righteousness also endureth for ever in the perpetual favor of God, and in the eternal rewards which God will confer on him, who, out of conscience and reverence toward God, out of good-will and kindness toward his brother, hath dispersed, and given to the poor. 'God will not,' as the Apostle saith, 'be unjust to forget his labor of charity in ministering' to his poor brother: from the seed which he 'hath sown to the spirit,' he shall assuredly reap a most plentiful crop of blessings spiritual; he shall effectually enjoy 'the good foundation' that he hath 'stored up:' for the goods he hath sold and delivered, he shall *bona fide* receive his bargain, 'the hidden treasure' and 'precious pearl' of eternal life; for this best improvement of his talent of worldly riches, he shall hear the *Euge bone serve*, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into thy master's joy:' he shall at last find God infinitely more bountiful to him, than he hath been unto the poor.

Thus when all the flashes of sensual pleasure are quite extinct, when all the flowers of secular glory are withered away; when all earthly treasures are buried in darkness; when this world, and all the fashion of it, are utterly vanished and gone, the bountiful man's state will still be firm and flourishing, and 'his righteousness shall endure for ever.'

It follows, 'His horn shall be exalted with honor.' A horn is an emblem of power; for in it the beasts' strength, offensive and defensive, doth consist; and of plenty, for it hath within it a capacity apt to contain what is put into it; and of sanctity, for that in it was put the holy oil with which kings were consecrated; and of dignity, both in consequence on the reasons mentioned, (as denoting might, and influence, and sacredness accompanying sovereign dignity,) and because also it is an especial beauty and ornament to the creature which hath it; so that this expression ('his horn shall be exalted with honor') may be supposed to import that an abundance of high and holy, of firm and solid honor shall attend on the bountiful person.

And that so it truly shall, may from many considerations appear.

1. Honor is inseparably annexed thereto, as its natural companion and shadow. God hath impressed on all virtue a majesty and a beauty which do command respect, and with a kindly violence extort veneration from men: such is the natural constitution of our souls, that as our sense necessarily liketh what is fair and sweet, so our mind unavoidably will esteem what is virtuous and worthy; all good actions as such are honorable; but of all virtues, beneficence doth with most unquestionable right claim honor, and with irresistible force procures it; as it is indeed the most divine of virtues, so men are most apt to venerate them, whom they observe eminently to practise it. Other virtues men see, and approve as goodly to the sight; but this they taste and feel; this by most sensible experience they find to be pleasant and profitable, and cannot therefore but highly prize it. They who 'do their alms before men,' although out of an unworthy vain-glorious design, have yet, as our Saviour intimates, their reward; they fail not to get honor thereby; and even so have no bad pennyworth; for, in the wise man's judgment, 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches;' they receive at least fine air for gross earth; and things very spiritual for things most material; they obtain that which every man doth naturally desire and prize, for that which only fashion in some places endeareth and commendeth: they get the end for the means; for scarce any man seeketh wealth for itself, but either for honor, or for virtue's sake, that he may live creditably, or may do good therewith: necessity is served with a little, pleasure may be satisfied with a competence; abundance is required only to support honor or promote good; and honor by a natural connexion adhereth to bounty. 'He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth life, righteousness, and honor:' Prov. xxi. 21.

2. But farther, an accession of honor, according to gracious promise, (grounded on somewhat of special reason, of equity and decency in the thing itself,) is due from God unto the bountiful person, and is by special providence surely conferred on him. There is no kind of piety, or instance of obedience, whereby God himself is more signally honored, than by this

These are chiefly those good works, the which men seeing, are apt to 'glorify our Father which is in heaven,' Phil. i. 11. 'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus to the glory and praise of God.' To these fruits that is most applicable which our Lord saith, 'Hereby is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit:' for as 'he that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker;' so 'he honoreth him that hath mercy on the poor.' The comfortable experience of good in this sort of actions will most readily dispose men to admire and commend the excellency, the wisdom, the goodness of the divine laws, will therefore procure God hearty praise and thanks for them: for, as St. Paul teacheth us, 'The administration of his service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; whilst by experiment of this ministration, they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men.' Since then God is so peculiarly honored by this practice, it is but equal and fit that God should remunerate it with honor: God's noble goodness will not let him seem defective in any sort of beneficial correspondence toward us; we shall never be able to yield him any kind of good thing in duty, which he will not be more apt to render us in grace; they who, as Solomon speaketh, 'honor God with their substance,' shall by God certainly be honored with his blessing: reason intimates so much, and we beside have God's express word for it; 'Them,' saith he, 'who honor me, I will honor.' He that absolutely and independently is the fountain of all honor, 'from whom,' as good king David saith, 'riches and honor cometh,' for that 'he reigneth over all,' he will assuredly prefer and dignify those who have been at special care and cost to advance his honor. He that hath the 'hearts of all men in his hands,' and 'fashioneth them' as he pleaseth, will raise the bountiful man in the judgments and affections of men. He that ordereth all the events of things, and disposeth success as he thinks fit, will cause the bountiful person's enterprises to prosper, and come off with credit. He will not suffer the reputation of so real an honorer of himself to be extremely slurred by disaster, to be blasted by slander, to be supplanted by envy or malice; but

will 'bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon-day.'

3. God will thus exalt the bountiful man's horn even here in this world, and to an infinitely higher pitch he will advance it in the future state: he shall there be set at the right hand, in a most honorable place and rank, among the chief friends and favorites of the heavenly King, in happy consortship with the holy angels and blessed saints; where, in recompense of his pious bounty, he shall, from the bountiful hands of his most gracious Lord, receive 'an incorruptible crown of righteousness,' and 'an unfading crown of glory.' The which God of his infinite mercy grant unto us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom for ever be all praise. Amen.

'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXXII.

PHILIPPIANS, CHAP. II.—VERSE 8.

FORLORN and desperate case of mankind, in consequence of original apostacy from God, and continued rebellion against him, stated. Great mercy of the Almighty in his design of our redemption from such woful distress. Apparent difficulty in the accomplishment of this design, consistently with God's glory, justice, and truth. How could we be cleared from our guilt without an expiation, reinstated in freedom without a ransom, or exempted from condemnation without punishment? Yet God was pleased to prosecute his designs of goodness and mercy, so as by no means to impair and obscure, but rather to advance and illustrate the glories of his sovereign dignity, justice, holiness, and unchangeable steadiness in word and purpose. But how might this be effected? Where could a proper and worthy mediator be found? Who could presume to put himself between God and us, to screen mankind from the divine wrath? Who had so great an interest in Heaven? Where could be found such among the degenerate sons of Adam? And how could available help be expected from any of the angelic host, seeing they are but our fellow-servants, and have obligations to discharge for themselves? Indeed no creature might aspire to so august an honor, or achieve so marvellous a work. Wherefore, seeing that a supereminent dignity of person was required in our Mediator, and an immense value for our ransom, none beside God himself could intermeddle therein. But how could God undertake the business? how become a suitor or intercessor to himself? how present a

sacrifice to his own justice? No. Surely man must also concur in the transaction: it was decent and expedient, that as man had by wilful transgression offended and dishonered his Maker, so man also, by willing obedience and patient submission, should right and glorify him.

Here then lay the stress: this was the knot which only divine wisdom could loose. And so it did in a most effectual and admirable way, corresponding to all the exigences of the case, so that God and man might both act their parts in saving us. This is that great and wonderful *mystery of godliness* which St. Paul here expresses; in which text there are many remarkable points: one particular however is alone insisted on, viz. *the death of the cross*, the contemplation of which, as it is most seasonable, so it is ever profitable.

In this kind of passion we may observe these notable adjuncts: 1. its being in appearance criminal: 2. its being most bitter and painful: 3. its being most ignominious and shameful: 4. its peculiar advantage to the designs of our Lord in suffering: 5. its practical efficacy.

I. The first of these points considered: its accordance with prophecy: its reasons developed. 1. That he might not seem to purchase our welfare at an easier rate; but might thoroughly exercise his compassion towards us, advancing his own merit, and discharging the utmost satisfaction in our behalf. 2. Death passing on him as a malefactor by public sentence, best suited the nature of his undertaking, most aptly represented what he was doing, and the reason of it: for we are all guilty in a high degree, and the foulest shame, with the sharpest pain, is justly due to us. 3. Seeing, *by the determinate counsel of God*, it was appointed that our Lord should die for us, and that not in a natural, but in a violent way, so as to satisfy God's justice and honor, it became in our Lord a signal act of deference to God's authority and justice, becoming the person sustained by him of our Mediator and Redeemer, to receive, as it were, a

doom from God's own mouth, uttered by his ministers, and to bear the stroke of justice from his hand, represented by his instruments. Whence his reply to Pilate, John xix. 11. 4. Our Saviour could hardly with such advantage, in any other way, have displayed all kinds of virtue and goodness, to the honor of God, to the edification of men, and to the furtherance of our salvation: this point enlarged on.

II. We may consider that in this kind his suffering was most bitter and painful. This suffering set forth and described. But he was thus content to bear the most intolerable pains for us, that he might thereby demonstrate the vehemence of his love; that he might signify the heinousness of our sins, which deserved that from such a person such a punishment should be exacted; that he might appear to yield a valuable compensation for those pains which we should have suffered; that he might exemplify the hardest duties of obedience and patience.

III. This manner of suffering was also most vile and shameful, being proper to the basest condition of the worst men, and unworthy of a freeman, however guilty: its ignominy in this point of view farther stated; also the peculiar indignities suffered by our blessed Saviour. Nor need we doubt but that he, as a man, endowed with human passions, was sensible of this natural evil, or that such indignities added bitterness to his cup of affliction: but he patiently bore all to exempt us from the ignominy and pain so justly due to us. Reasons drawn from the infinite dignity of our Saviour's person, the pure innocency of his life, his perfect discernment of God's wrath, and man's wretchedness, &c. to show that his sufferings were greatly augmented by peculiar circumstances.

IV. We may consider that this way of suffering had some peculiar advantages to the accomplishment of our Lord's designs.

Its being very notorious, and lasting a competent time, were great ones; for if he had been privately or suddenly dis-

patched, no such great notice would have been taken of it, nor would the fact have been so fully proved to the confirmation of our faith, and to the conviction of infidelity: nor would his admirable deportment under affliction have so illustriously shone forth. Another advantage was, that by it the nature of that kingdom, which he intended to erect, was evidently signified; and that it was not such as the carnal people expected. It was also a touchstone to prove the genuine disposition and worth of men, to distinguish those blessed ones, who *would not be offended in the scandal of the cross.* By it also God's special providence was discovered, and his glory illustrated in the propagation of the gospel: this point enlarged on.

V. Lastly, this manner of suffering is very useful in application to our practice; for what virtue will not a serious meditation on the cross be apt to breed and cherish in us? 1. We are hence infinitely obliged, with humble affection and hearty gratitude, to adore each person of the blessed Trinity; God the Father, who thus delivered up *his beloved Son* for our sakes, *even when we were enemies;* God the Son, who thus stooped from the dignity and felicity of heaven, to undergo infamy and pain on the cross, that he might redeem us from hell-torments, and re-instate us in the joys of paradise; God the Holy Ghost, who, as he did originally conspire in the wonderful project of our salvation, miraculously conduct our blessed Saviour into his earthly tabernacle, and assist his humanity through the whole course of his life, so also did in this juncture inspire him with charity more than human, and support him to undergo these pains with invincible patience, &c. 2. What surer ground can there be of faith in God, what stronger encouragement to hope, than is suggested by this consideration? *If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us* to the suffering of such contumelious affliction, *shall he not also with him freely give us all things?* 3. It may indeed yield great joy and consolation to us, to contemplate our Lord

on the cross, exercising his immense charity towards us, transacting all the work of our redemption, defeating all the enemies, and overthrowing all the obstacles of our salvation: this point enlarged on. 4. This consideration is most useful to render us very humble and sensible of our weakness, our vileness, and our wretchedness: for how low was that fall from which we could only be raised by such a depression of God's only Son? how abominable the iniquity which demanded such a sacrifice! 5. But farther, while this contemplation breeds sober humility, it should also preserve us from base abjectness of mind; for it evidently demonstrates, that, according to God's infallible judgment, we are still very considerable; that our souls are worthy of high regard: for if God had not greatly esteemed us, he would not have endured so much for our sakes. 6. Again, how can we reflect on this event, without extreme displeasure against, and hearty detestation of our sins, which brought such torture and disgrace on our blessed Redeemer? 7. And what in reason can be more powerful in working penitential sorrow and remorse, than reflexion on such horrible effects which our sins produced? 8. If ingenuity will not operate so far, and thereby melt us into contrition, yet surely this consideration must needs affect us with a religious fear. 9. But farther, how can meditation on this event do otherwise than greatly deter us from all wilful disobedience and commission of sin? for how can we determine to violate such engagements; thwart such an example of obedience; abuse such goodness; and disoblige such transcendent charity? 10. This consideration affords also very strong inducements to the practice of charity towards our neighbor; for how can we forbear to love those, towards whom our Saviour bore so tender an affection? &c. 11. Farthermore, what can be more operative than this point towards breeding a disregard of this world, with all its deceitful vanities and mischievous pleasures? This point enlarged on. 12. We are hence instructed and inclined cheer-

fully to submit to God's will, and gladly to accept from his hand whatever he disposeth, however grievous and afflictive to our natural will. 13. The willing susception and the cheerful sustenance of the cross, is indeed the express condition, and the peculiar character of our Christianity. 14. Let it be *to the Jews a scandal;* let it be *folly to the Greeks;* let this doctrine be scandalous and distasteful to some persons tainted with prejudice; let it be strange and incredible to others blinded by self-deceit; yet to us it must appear grateful and joyous, *a faithful proposition worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,* in this way of suffering for them. Conclusion.

SERMON XXXII.

ON THE PASSION OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR.

PHILIPPIANS, CHAP. II.—VERSE 8.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

WHEN, in consequence of the original apostacy from God, which did banish us from paradise, and by continued rebellions against him, inevitable to our corrupt and impotent nature, mankind had forfeited the amity of God, (the chief of all goods, the fountain of all happiness,) and had incurred his displeasure; (the greatest of all evils, the foundation of all misery:)

When poor man having deserted his natural Lord and Protector, 'other lords had got dominion over him,' so that he was captivated by the foul, malicious, cruel spirits, and enslaved to his own vain mind, to vile lusts, to wild passions:

When, according to an eternal rule of justice, that sin deserveth punishment, and by an express law, wherein death was enacted to the transgressors of God's command, the root of our stock, and consequently all its branches, stood adjudged to utter destruction:

When, according to St. Paul's expressions, all the world was become guilty before God, (or, subjected to God's judgment:) all men (Jews and Gentiles) were under sin, under condemnation, under the curse; all men were concluded into disobedience, and shut up together (as close prisoners) under

sin; all men had sinned, and come short of the glory of God: death had passed over all, because all had sinned:

When for us, being plunged into so wretched a condition, no visible remedy did appear, no possible redress could be obtained here below: (for what means could we have of recovering God's favor, who were apt perpetually to contract new debts and guilts, but not able to discharge any old scores? What capacity of mind or will had we to entertain mercy, who were no less stubbornly perverse and obdurate in our crimes, than ignorant or infirm? How could we be reconciled unto heaven, who had an innate antipathy to God and goodness? [Sin, according to our natural state, and secluding evangelical grace, 'reigning in our mortal bodies, no good thing dwelling in us;' there being a predominant 'law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin;' a main ingredient of our old man, being a 'carnal mind,' which is enmity to God, and 'cannot submit to his law;' we being 'alienated from the life of God by the blindness of our hearts,' and 'enemies in our own minds by wicked works:'] How could we revive to any good hope, who were 'dead in trespasses and sins,' God having withdrawn his quickening spirit? How at least could we for one moment stand upright in God's sight, on the natural terms, excluding all sin, and exacting perfect obedience?)

When this, I say, was our forlorn and desperate case, then Almighty God, out of his infinite goodness, was pleased to look on us (as he sometime did on Jerusalem, 'lying polluted in her blood') with an eye of pity and mercy, so as graciously to design a redemption for us out of all that woful distress: and no sooner by his incomprehensible wisdom did he forsee we should lose ourselves, than by his immense grace he did conclude to restore us.

But how could this happy design well be compassed? How, in consistence with the glory, with the justice, with the truth of God, could such enemies be reconciled, such offenders be pardoned, such wretches be saved? Would the omnipotent Majesty, so affronted, design to treat with his rebels immediately, without an intercessor or advocate? Would the sovereign Governor of the world suffer thus notoriously his right to be

violated, his authority to be slighted, his honor to be trampled on, without some notable vindication or satisfaction? Would the great Patron of justice relax the terms of it, or ever permit a gross breach thereof to pass with impunity? Would the immutable God of truth expose his veracity or his constancy to suspicion, by so reversing that peremptory sentence of death on sinners, that it should not in a sort eminently be accomplished? Would the most righteous and most holy God let slip an opportunity so advantageous for demonstrating his perfect love of innocence, and abhorrence of iniquity? Could we therefore well be cleared from our guilt without an expiation, or reinstated in freedom without a ransom, or exempted from condemnation without some punishment?

No: God was so pleased to prosecute his designs of goodness and mercy, as thereby nowise to impair or obscure, but rather to advance and illustrate the glories of his sovereign dignity, of his severe justice, of his immaculate holiness, of his unchangeable steadiness in word and purpose. He accordingly would be sued to for peace and mercy: nor would he grant them absolutely, without due compensations for the wrongs he had sustained; yet so, that his goodness did find us a Mediator, and furnish us with means to satisfy him. He would not condescend to a simple remission of our debts; yet so, that, saving his right and honor, he did stoop lower for an effectual abolition of them. He would make good his word, not to let our trespasses go unpunished; yet so, that by our punishment we might receive advantage. He would manifest his detestation of wickedness in a way more illustrious than if he had persecuted it down to hell, and irreversibly doomed it to endless torment.

But how might these things be effected? Where was there a Mediator proper and worthy to intercede for us? Who could presume to solicit and plead in our behalf? Who should dare to put himself between God and us, or offer to screen mankind from the divine wrath and vengeance? Who had so great an interest in the court of heaven, as to ingratiate such a brood of apostate enemies thereto? Who could assume the confidence to propose terms of reconciliation, or to agitate a new covenant, wherewith God might be satisfied, and

whereby we might be saved? Where, in heaven or earth, could there be found a priest fit to atone for sins so vastly numerous, so extremely heinous? And whence should a sacrifice be taken, of value sufficient to expiate for so manifold enormities, committed against the infinite Majesty of heaven? Who could 'find out the everlasting redemption' of innumerable souls, or lay down a competent ransom for them all? Not to say, could also purchase for them eternal life and bliss?

These are questions which would puzzle all the wit of man, yea, would gravel all the wisdom of angels to resolve: for plain it is, that no creature on earth, none in heaven, could well undertake or perform this work.

Where on earth, among the degenerate sons of Adam, could be found 'such a high priest as became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners?' and how could a man, however innocent and pure as a seraphim, so perform his duty, as to do more than merit or satisfy for himself? How many lives could the life of one man serve to ransom; seeing that it is asserted of the greatest and richest among men, that 'none of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him.'

And how could available help in this case be expected from any of the angelical host; seeing (beside their being in nature different from us, and thence improper to merit or satisfy for us; beside their comparative meanness, and infinite distance from the majesty of God) they are but our fellow-servants, and have obligations to discharge for themselves, and cannot be solvent for more than for their own debts of gratitude and service to their infinitely-bountiful Creator; they also themselves needing a Saviour, to preserve them by his grace in their happy state?

Indeed, no creature might aspire to so august an honor, none could achieve so marvellous a work, as to redeem from infinite guilt and misery the noblest part of all the visible creation: none could presume to invade that high prerogative of God, or attempt to infringe the truth of that reiterated proclamation, 'I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour.'

Wherefore, seeing that a supereminent dignity of person was required in our Mediator, and that an immense value was to be

presented for our ransom; seeing that 'God saw there was no man, and wondered (or took special notice) that there was no intercessor;' it must be his arm alone that could bring salvation; none beside God himself could intermeddle therein.

But how could God undertake the business? Could he become a suitor or intercessor to his offended self? Could he present a sacrifice, or disburse a satisfaction to his own justice? Could God alone contract and stipulate with God in our behalf? No; surely man also must concur in the transaction: some amends must issue from him, somewhat must be paid out of our stock: human will and consent must be interposed, to ratify a firm covenant with us, inducing obligation on our part. It was decent and expedient, that as man, by wilful transgression and presumptuous self-pleasing, had so highly offended, injured, and dishonored his Maker; so man also, by willing obedience, and patient submission to God's pleasure, should greatly content, right, and glorify him.

Here then did lie the stress; this was the knot, which only divine wisdom could loose. And so indeed it did in a most effectual and admirable way: for in correspondence to all the exigences of the case, (that God and man both might act their parts in saving us,) the blessed eternal Word, the only Son of God, by the good-will of his Father, did vouchsafe to intercede for us, and to undertake our redemption; in order thereto voluntarily being sent down from heaven, assuming human flesh, subjecting himself to all the infirmities of our frail nature, and to the worst inconveniences of our low condition; therein meriting God's favor to us, by a perfect obedience to the law, and satisfying God's justice by a most patient endurance of pains in our behalf; in completion of all, willingly laying down his life for the ransom of our souls, and pouring forth his blood in sacrifice for our sins.

This is that great and wonderful 'mystery of godliness,' (or of our holy religion,) the which St. Paul here doth express, in these words concerning our blessed Saviour; 'Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found

in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'

In which words are contained divers points very observable. But seeing the time will not allow me to treat on them in any measure as they deserve, I shall (waving all the rest) insist but on one particular, couched in the last words, 'even the death of the cross;' which by a special emphasis do excite us to consider the manner of that holy passion which we now commemorate; the contemplation whereof, as it is most seasonable, so it is ever very profitable.

Now then in this kind of passion we may consider divers notable adjuncts; namely these: 1. Its being in appearance criminal. 2. Its being most bitter and painful. 3. Its being most ignominious and shameful. 4. Its peculiar advantageousness to the designs of our Lord in suffering. 5. Its practical efficacy.

I. We may consider our Lord's suffering as criminal; or as in semblance being an execution of justice on him. 'He,' as the prophet foretold of him, 'was numbered among the transgressors;' and God, saith St. Paul, 'made him sin for us, who knew no sin:' that is, God ordered him to be treated as a most sinful or criminous person, who in himself was perfectly innocent, and void of the least inclination to offend.

So in effect it was, that he was impeached of the highest crimes; as a violator of the divine laws in divers instances; as a designer to subvert their religion and temple; as an impostor, deluding and seducing the people; as a blasphemer, assuming to himself the properties and prerogatives of God; as a seditious and rebellious person, perverting the nation, inhibiting payments of tribute to Cæsar, usurping royal authority, and styling himself 'Christ a king:' in a word, as a malefactor, or one guilty of enormous offences; so his persecutors avowed to Pilate, 'If,' said they, 'he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.' As such he was represented and arraigned; as such, although by a sentence wrested by malicious importunity, against the will and conscience of the judge, he was condemned, and accordingly suffered death.

Now whereas any death or passion of our Lord, as being in

itself immensely valuable, and most precious in the sight of God, might have been sufficient toward the accomplishment of his general designs, (the appeasing God's wrath, the satisfaction of divine justice, the expiation of our guilt;) it may be inquired, why God should thus expose him, or why he should choose to suffer under this odious and ugly character? Which inquiry is the more considerable, because it is especially this circumstance which crosseth the fleshly sense and worldly prejudices of men, so as to have rendered the gospel offensive to the superstitious Jews, and despicable to conceited Gentiles. For so Tryphon in Justin Martyr, although, from conviction by testimonies of Scripture, he did admit the Messias was to suffer hardly, yet that it should be in this accursed manner, he could not digest. So the great adversaries of Christianity (Celsus, Porphyry, Julian) did with most contempt urge this exception against it. So St. Paul did observe, that 'Christ crucified was unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.' Wherefore, to avoid those scandals, and that we may better admire the wisdom of God in this dispensation, it may be fit to assign some reasons intimated in holy Scripture, or bearing conformity to its doctrine, why it was thus ordered. Such are these.

1. As our Saviour freely did undertake a life of greatest meanness and hardship, so on the like accounts he might be pleased to undergo a death most loathsome and uncomfortable. There is nothing to man's nature (especially to the best natures, in which modesty and ingenuity do survive) more abominable than such a death. God for good purposes hath planted in our constitution a quick sense of disgrace; and, of all disgraces, that which proceedeth from an imputation of crimes is most pungent; and being conscious of our innocence doth heighten the smart; and to reflect on ourselves dying under it, leaving the world with an indelible stain on our name and memory, is yet more grievous. Even to languish by degrees, enduring the torments of a long, however sharp disease, would to an honest mind seem more eligible, than in this manner, being reputed and handled as a villain, to find a quick and easy dispatch.

Of which human resentment may we not observe a touch in that expostulation, 'Be ye come out, as against a thief, with

swords and staves?' If as a man he did not like to be prosecuted as a thief; yet willingly did he choose it, as he did other most distasteful things pertaining to our nature, 'the likeness of man,') and incident to that low condition, ('the form of a servant,') into which he did put himself: such as were, to endure penury, and to fare hardly, to be slighted, envied, hated, reproached through all his course of life.

It is well said by a Pagan philosopher, that 'no man doth express such a respect and devotion to virtue, as doth he who forfeiteth the repute of being a good man, that he may not lose the conscience of being such.' This our Lord willingly made his case, being content not only to expose his life, but to prostitute his fame, for the interests of goodness.

Had he died otherwise, he might have seemed to purchase our welfare at a somewhat easier rate; he had not been so complete a sufferer; he had not tasted the worst that man is liable to endure: there had been a comfort in seeming innocent, detracting from the perfection of his sufferance.

Whereas therefore he often was in hazard of death, both from the clandestine machinations and the outrageous violences of those who maligned him, he did industriously shun a death so plausible, and honorable, if I may so speak; it being not so disgraceful to fall by private malice, or by sudden rage, as by the solemn deliberate proceeding of men in public authority and principal credit.

Accordingly this kind of death did not fall on him by surprise, or by chance; but he did from the beginning foresee it; he plainly with satisfaction did aim at it: he, as it is related in the gospels, did show his disciples that it was incumbent on him by God's appointment and his own choice; that he ought, it is said, to suffer many things, to be rejected by the chief priests, elders, and scribes, to be vilified by them, to be delivered up to the Gentiles, to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified, as a flagitious slave. Thus would our blessed Saviour, in conformity to the rest of his voluntary afflictions, and for a consummation of them, not only suffer in his body by sore wounds and bruises, and in his soul by doleful agonies, but in his name also and reputation by the foulest scandals; undergoing as well all the infamy as the infirmity which did belong

to us, or might befal us: thus meaning by all means throughly to express his charity, and exercise his compassion towards us; thus advancing his merit, and discharging the utmost satisfaction in our behalf.

2. Death passing on him as a malefactor by public sentence, did best suit to the nature of his undertaking, was most congruous to his intent, did most aptly represent what he was doing, and imply the reason of his performance. For we all are guilty in a most high degree, and in a manner very notorious; the foulest shame, together with the sharpest pain, is due to us for affronting our glorious Maker; we deserve an open condemnation and exemplary punishment: wherefore he, undertaking in our stead to bear all, and fully to satisfy for us, was pleased to undergo the like judgment and usage; being termed, being treated as we should have been, in quality of an heinous malefactor, as we in truth are. What we had really acted in dishonoring and usurping on God, in disordering the world, in perverting others, that was imputed to him; and the punishment due to that guilt was inflicted on him. 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.' He therefore did not only sustain an equivalent pain for us, but in a sort did bear an equal blame with us, before God and man.

3. Seeing, 'by the determinate counsel of God,' it was appointed that our Lord should die for us, and that not in a natural, but violent way, so as perfectly to satisfy God's justice, to vindicate his honor, to evidence both his indignation against sin, and willingness to be appeased; it was most fit that affair should be transacted in a way, wherein God's right is most nearly concerned, and his providence most plainly discernible; wherein it should be most apparent that God did exact and inflict the punishment, that our Lord did freely yield to it, and submissively undergo it, on those very accounts. All judgment, as Moses of old did say, is God's, or is administered by authority derived from him, in his name, for his interest; all magistrates being his officers and instruments, whereby he governeth and ordereth the world, his natural kingdom: whence that which is acted in way of formal judgment by persons in

authority, God himself may be deemed in a more special and immediate manner to execute it, as being done by his commission, in his stead, on his behalf, with his peculiar superintendence. It was therefore in our Lord a signal act of deference to God's authority and justice, becoming the person sustained by him of our Mediator and Proxy, to undergo such a judgment, and such a punishment; whereby he received a doom as it were from God's own mouth, uttered by his ministers, and bare the stroke of justice from God's hand, represented by his instruments. Whence very seasonably and patiently did he reply to Pilate, 'Thou hadst no power over me, (or against me) except it were given thee from above:' implying that it was in regard to the originally supreme authority of God his father, and to his particular appointment on this occasion, that our Saviour did then frankly subject himself to those inferior powers, as to the proper ministers of divine justice. Had he suffered in any other way, by the private malice or passion of men, God's special providence in that case had been less visible, and our Lord's obedience not so remarkable. And if he must die by public hands, it must be as a criminal, under a pretence of guilt and demerit; there must be a formal process, how full soever of mockery and outrage; there must be testimonies produced, how void soever of truth or probability; there must be a sentence pronounced, although most corrupt and injurious: for no man is in this way persecuted, without color of desert: otherwise it would cease to be public authority, and become lawless violence; the persecutor then would put off the face of a magistrate, and appear as a cut-throat or a robber.

4. In fine, our Saviour hardly with such advantage, in any other way, could have displayed all kinds of virtue and goodness, to the honor of God, to the edification of men, to the furtherance of our salvation.

The judgment-hall, with all the passages leading him thither, and thence to execution, attended with guards of soldiers, amidst the crowds and clamors of people, were as so many theatres, on which he had opportune convenience, in the full eye of the world, to act divers parts of sublimest virtue: to express his insuperable constancy, in attesting truth, and maintaining a good conscience; his meekness, in calmly bearing

the greatest wrongs; his patience, in contentedly enduring the saddest adversities; his intire resignation to the will and providence of God; his peaceable submission to the law and power of man; his admirable charity, in pitying, in excusing, in obliging those by his good wishes, and earnest prayers for their pardon, who in a manner so injurious, so despiteful, so cruel, did persecute him, yea, in gladly suffering all this from their hands for their salvation; his unshakeable faith in God, and unalterable love toward him, under so fierce a trial, so dreadful a temptation. All these excellent virtues and graces, by the matter being thus ordered, in a degree most eminent, and in a manner very conspicuous, were demonstrated to the praise of God's name, and the commendation of his truth; for the settlement of our faith and hope, for an instruction and an encouragement to us of good practice in those highest instances of virtue.

It is a passable notion among the most eminent Pagan sages, that no very exemplary virtue can well appear otherwise than in notable misfortune. Whence it is said in Plato, that to approve a man heartily righteous, he must be scourged, tortured, bound, have his two eyes burnt out, and in the close, having suffered all evils, must be impaled, or crucified. And, 'It was,' saith Seneca, 'the cup of poison which made Socrates a great man, and which out of prison did transfer him to heaven,' or did procure to him that lofty esteem, affording him opportunity to signalise his constancy, his equanimity, his unconcernedness for this world and life. And, 'The virtue,' saith he again, 'and the innocence of Rutilius would have lain hid, if it had not (by condemnation and exile) received injury; while it was violated, it brightly shone forth.' And he that said this of others, was himself in nothing so illustrious, as in handsomely entertaining that death to which he was by the bloody tyrant adjudged. And generally, the most honorable persons in the judgment of posterity for gallant worth, to this very end (as such philosophers teach) were by divine Providence delivered up to suffer opprobrious condemnations and punishments, by the ingrateful malignity of their times. So that the Greeks, in consistence with their own wisdom and experience, could not reasonably scorn that cross which our

good Lord (did not only, as did their best worthies, by forcible accidental constraint undergo, but) advisedly by free choice did undertake, to recommend the most excellent virtues to imitation, and to promote the most noble designs that could be, by its influence.

So great reason there was that our Lord should thus suffer as a criminal.

II. We may consider that in that kind his suffering was most bitter and painful. Easily we may imagine what acerbity of pain must be endured by our Lord, in his tender limbs being stretched forth, racked, and tentered, and continuing for a good time in such a posture; by the 'piercing his hands and his feet,' parts very nervous and exquisitely sensible, with sharp nails, (so that, as it is said of Joseph, 'the iron entered into his soul;') by abiding exposed to the injuries of the sun scorching, the wind beating, the weather searching his grievous wounds and sores. Such a pain it was; and that no stupifying, no transient pain, but one both very acute and lingering: for we see that he, together with his fellow-sufferers, had both presence of mind and time to discourse. Even six long hours did he remain under such torture, sustaining in each moment of them beyond the pangs of an ordinary death. But as the case was so hard and sad, so the reason of it was great, and the fruit answerably good. Our Saviour did embrace such a passion, that, in being thus content to endure the most intolerable smarts for us, he might demonstrate the vehemence of his love; that he might signify the heinousness of our sins, which deserved that from such a person so heavy punishment should be exacted; that he might appear to yield a valuable compensation for those pains which we should have suffered; that he throughly might exemplify the hardest duties of obedience and patience.

III. This manner of suffering was (as most sharp and afflictive, so) most vile and shameful; being proper to the basest condition of the worst men, and unworthy of a freeman, however nocent and guilty. It was *servile supplicium*, a punishment never by the Romans, under whose law our Lord suffered, legally inflicted on freemen, but on slaves only; that is, on people scarcely regarded as men, having in a sort forfeited or

lost themselves. And among the Jews that execution which most approached thereto, and in part agreed with it, (for their law did not allow any so inhuman punishment,) hanging up the dead bodies of some that had been put to death, was held most infamous and execrable: for, 'cursed,' said the law, 'is every one that hangeth on a tree;' cursed, that is, devoted to reproach and malediction; 'accursed by God,' saith the Hebrew, that is, seeming to be rejected by God, and by his special order exposed to affliction.

Indeed, according to the course of things, to be set on high, and for continuance of time to be objected to the view of all that pass by, in that calamitous posture, doth infuse bad suspicion, doth provoke censure, doth invite contempt and scorn, doth naturally draw forth language of derision, despite, and detestation; especially from the inconsiderate, hard-hearted, and rude vulgar, which commonly doth think, speak, and deal according to event and appearance: (—*Sequitur fortunam semper, et odit damnatos*—) whence θεατρίζεσθαι, 'to be made a gazing-stock,' or an object of reproach to the multitude, is by the Apostle mentioned as an aggravation of the hardships endured by the primitive Christians. And thus in extremity did it befal our Lord: for we read that the people did in that condition mock, jeer, and revile him, drawing up their noses, abusing him by scurrilous gestures, letting out their virulent and wanton tongues against him; so as to verify that prediction, 'I am a reproach of men, and despised of the people: all they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord, let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.'

The same persons who formerly had admired his glorious works, who had been ravished with his excellent discourses, who had followed and favored him so earnestly, who had blessed and magnified him, ('for he,' saith St. Luke, 'taught in the synagogues, being glorified by all,') even those very persons did then behold him with pitiless contempt and despite. In correspondence to that prophecy, 'they look and stare on me,' εἱστήκει ὁ λαὸς θεωρῶν, 'the people stood gazing' on him, in a most scornful manner, venting contemptuous and spiteful reproaches; as we see reported in the evangelical story.

Thus did our blessed Saviour 'endure the cross, despising the shame.' 'Despising the shame,' that is, not simply disregarding it, or (with a stoical haughtiness, with a cynical immodesty, with a stupid carelessness) slighting it as no evil; but not eschewing it, or not rating it for so great an evil, that to decline it he would neglect the prosecution of his great and glorious designs.

There is innate to man an aversation and abhorrency from disgraceful abuse, no less strong than are the like antipathies to pain: whence cruel mockings and scourgings are coupled as ingredients of the sore persecutions sustained by God's faithful martyrs. And generally men with more readiness will embrace, with more contentedness will endure the cruelty of the latter, than of the former; pain not so smartly affecting the lower sense, as being insolently contemned doth grate on the fancy, and wound even the mind itself. For the wounds of infamy do, as the wise man telleth us, 'go down into the innermost parts of the belly,' reaching the very heart, and touching the soul to the quick.

We therefore need not doubt but that our Saviour as a man, endowed with human passions, was sensible of this natural evil; and that such indignities did add somewhat of loathsomeness to his cup of affliction; especially considering that his great charity disposed him to grieve, observing men to act so indecently, so unworthily, so unjustly toward him: yet in consideration of the glory that would thence accrue to God, of the benefit that would redound to us, of the 'joy that was set before him,' when 'he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied,' he most willingly did accept, and most gladly did comport with it. He 'became a curse for us,' exposed to malediction and reviling; he 'endured the contradiction,' or obloquy, 'of sinful men:' he was 'despised, rejected, and disesteemed of men:' he in common apprehension was deserted by God, according to that of the prophet, 'We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted:' himself even seeming to concur in that opinion. So was he 'made a curse for us,' that we, as the Apostle teacheth, might 'be redeemed from the curse of the law;' that is, that we might be freed from the exemplary punishment due to our transgressions of the law, with the dis-

pleasure of God appearing therein, and the disgrace before the world attending it. He chose thus to 'make himself of no reputation,' vouchsafing to be dealt with as a wretched slave and a wicked miscreant, that we might be exempted not only from the torment, but also from the ignominy which we had merited: that together with our life, our safety, our liberty, we might even recover that honor which we had forfeited and embezzled.

But lest any should be tempted not sufficiently to value these sufferances of our Lord, as not so rare, but that other men have tasted the like; lest any should presume to compare them with afflictions incident to other persons, as Celsus did compare them with those of Anaxarchus and Epictetus; it is requisite to consider some remarkable particulars about them.

We may then consider that not only the infinite dignity of his person, and the perfect innocency of his life, did enhance the price of his sufferings; but some endowments peculiar to him, and some circumstances adhering to his design, did much augment their force.

He was not only, according to the frame and temper of human nature, sensibly touched with the pain, the shame, the whole combination of disasters apparently waiting on his passion; as God (when he did insert sense and passion into our nature, ordering objects to affect them) did intend we should be, and as other men in like circumstances would have been; but in many respects beyond that ordinary rate: so that no man, we may suppose, could have felt such grief from them as he did, no man ever hath been sensible of any thing comparable to what he did endure; that passage being truly applicable to him, 'Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger;' as that unparalleled 'sweating out great lumps of blood' may argue; and as the terms expressing his resentments do intimate. For, in respect of present evils, he said of himself, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful to death;' he is said ἀδημονεῖν, 'to be in great anguish' and anxiety, to be in an agony or pang of sorrow. In regard to mischiefs which he saw coming on, he is said to be 'disturbed in spirit,' and to be 'sore amazed,' or dismayed at them. To

such an exceeding height did the sense of incumbent evils, and the prospect of impendent calamities, the apprehension of his case, together with a reflexion on our condition, screw up his affections.

And no wonder that such a burden, even the weight of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and abominations, that ever were committed by mankind, by appropriation of them to himself, lying on his shoulders, he should feel it heavy, or seem to crouch and groan under it; that in the mystical psalm, applied by the Apostle to him, he should cry out, 'Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart faileth me.' The sight of God's indignation, so dreadfully flaming out against sin, might well astonish and terrify him: to stand, as it were, before the mouth of hell belching fire and brimstone in his face; to lie down in the hottest furnace of divine vengeance; to quench with his own heart-blood the wrath of heaven, and the infernal fire, (as he did in regard to those who will not rekindle them to themselves,) might well in the heart of a man beget unconceivable and unexpressible pressures of affliction. When such a Father (so infinitely good and kind to him, whom he so dearly and perfectly loved) did hide his face from him, did frown on him, how could he otherwise than be mightily troubled? Is it strange that so hearty a love, so tender a pity, contemplating our sinfulness, and experimenting our wretchedness, should be deeply touched? To see, I say, so plainly, to feel so thoroughly the horrible blindness, the folly, the infidelity, the imbecility, the ingratitude, the incorrigibility, the strange perverseness, perfidiousness, malice, and cruelty of mankind in so many instances, (in the treason of Judas, in the denial of Peter, in the desertion of all the Apostles, in the spite and rage of the persecutors, in the falsehood of the witnesses, in the abuses of the people, in the compliance of Pilate, in a general conspiracy of friends and foes to sin,) all these surrounding him, all invading him, all discharging themselves on him; would it not astone a mind so pure? would it not wound a heart so tender and full of charity?

Surely, any of those persons who fondly do pretend unto, or

vainly do glory in, a sullen apathy, or a stubborn contempt of the evils incident to our nature and state, would in such a case have been utterly dejected: the most resolved philosopher would have been dashed into confusion at the sight, would have been crushed into desperation under the sense of those evils which did assault him.

With the greatness of the causes, the goodness of his constitution did conspire to increase his sufferings. For surely, as his complexion was most pure and delicate, his spirit most vivid and apprehensive, his affections most pliant and tractable; so accordingly would the impressions on him be most sensible, and consequently the pains which he felt (in body or soul) most afflictive.

That we in like cases are not alike moved, that we do not tremble at the apprehensions of God's displeasure, that we are not affrighted with the sense of our sins, that we do not with sad horror resent our danger and our misery, doth arise from that we have very glimmering and faint conceptions of those matters; or that they do not in so clear and lively a manner strike our fancy; (not appearing in their true nature and proper shape, so heinous and so hideous as they really are in themselves and in their consequences;) or because we have but weak persuasions about them; or because we do but slightly consider them; or from that our hearts are very hard and callous, our affections very cold and dull, so that nothing of this nature (nothing beside gross material affairs) can mollify or melt them; or for that we have in us small love to God, and a slender regard to our own welfare; in fine, for that in spiritual matters we are neither so wise, so sober, so serious, nor so good or ingenuous, in any reasonable measure, as we should be. But our Saviour, in all those respects, was otherwise disposed. He most evidently discerned the wrath of God, the grievousness of sin, the wretchedness of man, most truly, most fully, most strongly represented to his mind; he most firmly believed, yea most certainly knew, whatever God's law had declared about them: he did exactly consider and weigh them: his heart was most soft and sensible, his affections were most quick and excitable by their due objects: he was full of dutiful love to God, and most ardently desirous of our good, bearing a more

than fraternal good-will towards us. Whence it is not so marvellous that as a man, as a transcendently wise and good man he was so vehemently affected by those occurrences, that his imagination was so troubled, and his passions so stirred by them; so that he thence did suffer in a manner and to a degree unconceivable; according to that ejaculation in the Greek liturgies, διὰ τῶν ἀγνώστων σου παθημάτων ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, Χριστέ, 'by thy unknown sufferings, O Christ, have mercy on us.' But farther,

IV. We may consider that this way of suffering had in it some particular advantages, conducing to the accomplishment of our Lord's principal designs.

Its being very notorious, and lasting a competent time, were good advantages. For if he had been privately made away, or suddenly dispatched, no such great notice would have been taken of it, nor would the matter of fact have been so fully proved, to the confirmation of our faith, and conviction of infidelity; nor had that his excellent deportment under such bitter affliction (his most divine patience, meekness, and charity) so illustriously shone forth. Wherefore, to prevent all exceptions, and excuses of unbelief, (together with other collateral good purposes,) divine Providence did so manage the business, that as the course of his life, so also the manner of his death, should be most conspicuously remarkable. 'I spake freely to the world, and in secret have I done nothing,' said he of himself; and, 'These things,' said St. Paul to king Agrippa, 'were not done in a corner.' Such were the proceedings of his life, not close or clancular, but frank and open; not presently hushed up, but leisurely carried on in the face of the world, that men might have the advantage to observe and examine them. And as he lived, so he died, most publicly and visibly; the world being witness of his death, and so prepared to believe his resurrection, and thence disposed to embrace his doctrine; according to what he did foretel, 'I, being lifted up from the earth, shall draw all men to me:' for he drew all men, by so obvious a death, to take notice of it; he drew all well-disposed persons, from the wondrous consequences of it, to believe on him. And as, said he again, 'Moses did exalt the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be exalted.'

As the elevation of that mysterious serpent did render it visible, and did attract the eyes of people towards it; whereby, God's power invisibly accompanying that sacramental performance, they were cured of those mortiferous stings which they had received: so our Lord, being mounted on the cross, allured the eyes of men to behold him, and their hearts to close with him; whereby, the heavenly virtue of God's Spirit cooperating, they became saved from those destructive sins, which from the Devil's serpentine instigations they had incurred.

Another advantage of this kind of suffering was, that by it the nature of that kingdom, which he did intend to erect, was evidently signified: that it was not such as the carnal people did expect, an external, earthly, temporal kingdom, consisting in domination over the bodies and estates of men, dignified by outward wealth and splendor, managed by worldly power and policy, promoted by forcible compulsion and terror of arms, affording the advantages of safety, quiet, and prosperity here; but a kingdom purely spiritual, celestial, eternal; consisting in the governance of men's hearts and minds; adorned with the endowments of wisdom and virtue; administered by the conduct and grace of God's holy Spirit; upheld and propagated by meek instruction, by virtuous example, by hearty devotion, and humble patience; rewarding its loyal subjects with spiritual joys and consolations now, with heavenly rest and bliss hereafter. No other kingdom could he presume to design, who submitted to this dolorous and disgraceful way of suffering; no other exploits could he pretend to achieve by expiring on a cross; no other way could he rule, who gave himself to be managed by the will of his adversaries; no other benefits would this forlorn case allow him to dispense. So that well might he then assert, 'My kingdom is not of this world;' when he was going in this signal way to demonstrate that important truth.

It was also a most convenient touchstone to prove the genuine disposition and worth of men; so as to discriminate those wise, sober, ingenuous, sincere, generous souls, who could discern true goodness through so dark a cloud, who could love it though so ill-favoredly disfigured, who could embrace and avow it notwithstanding so terrible disadvantages; it served, I say, to distinguish those blessed ones, who 'would not be

offended in him,' or by 'the scandal of the cross' be discouraged from adhering to him, from the crew of blind, vain, perverse, haughty people, who, being scandalised at his adversity, would contemn and reject him.

Another considerable advantage was this, that by it God's special providence was discovered, and his glory illustrated in the propagation of the gospel. For how could it be, that a person of so low parentage, of so mean garb, of so poor condition, who underwent so lamentable and despicable a kind of death, falling under the pride and spite of his enemies, so easily should gain so general an opinion in the world (even among the best, the wisest, the greatest persons) of being 'the Lord of life and glory?' How, I say, could it happen that such a miracle could be effected without God's aid and special concurrence? That king Herod, who from a long reign in florishing state, with prosperous success in his enterprises, did attain the name of Great; or that Vespasian, who triumphantly did ascend the imperial throne, should either of them, by a few admirers of worldly vanity, seriously be held, or in flattery be called the Messias, is not so strange: but that one who was trampled on so miserably, and treated as a wretched caitiff, should instantly conquer innumerable hearts, and, from such a depth of extreme adversity, should be advanced to the sublimest pitch of glory; that 'the stone which the builders' with so much scorn 'did refuse,' should 'become the head-stone of the corner; this' (with good assurance we may say) 'was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

Hereby indeed 'the excellency of divine power' and wisdom was much glorified; by so impotent, so improbable, so implausible means accomplishing so great effects; subduing the world to obedience of God, not by the active valor of an illustrious hero, but through the patient submission of a poor, abused, and oppressed person; restoring mankind to life and happiness by the sorrowful death of a crucified Saviour.

V. Lastly, the consideration of our Lord's suffering in this manner is very useful in application to our practice: no point is more fruitful of wholesome instruction, none is more forcible to kindle devout affections, none can afford more efficacious inducements and incentives to a pious life. For what virtue

will not a serious meditation on the cross be apt to breed and to cherish? To what duty will it not engage and excite us?

1. Are we not hence infinitely obliged, with most humble affection and hearty gratitude, to adore each person of the blessed Trinity?

That God the Father should design such a redemption for us; not sparing his own Son, (the Son of his love, dear to him as himself,) but delivering him up for us, to be thus dealt with for our sake: that God would endure to see his Son in so pitiful a condition, to hear him groaning under so grievous pressures, to let him be so horribly abused; and that for us, who deserved nothing from him, who had demerited so much against him; for us, who were no friends to him, (for 'even when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son;') who were not any ways commendable for goodness or righteousness: (for 'Christ did suffer for sinners, the just for the unjust;' and 'God commended his love to us, that while we were sinful, Christ died for us:') that God thus should 'love us, sending his Son to be a propitiation for our sins,' in so dismal a way of suffering, how stupendous is that goodness! How vast an obligation doth it lay on us to reciprocal affection! If we do owe all to God, as our maker, from whose undeserved bounty we did receive all that we have; how much farther do we stand indebted to him as the author of our redemption, from whose ill-deserved mercy we receive a new being, and better state; and that in a way far more obliging! For God created us with a word, without more cost or trouble: but to redeem us stood him in huge expenses and pains; no less than the debasing of his only Son to our frailty, the exposing him to more than our misery, the withdrawing his face and restraining his bowels from his best beloved. If a Jew then were commanded by law, if a Gentile were obliged by nature, to 'love God with all his heart and all his soul;' what affection doth a Christian, under the law and duty of grace, owe unto him? By what computation can we reckon that debt? What faculties have we sufficient to discharge it? What finite heart can hold an affection commensurate to such an obligation?

And how can it otherwise than inflame our heart with love toward the blessed Son of God, our Saviour, to consider that merely out of charitable pity toward us, he purposely came down from heaven, and took our flesh on him, that he might therein undergo those extreme acerbities of pain, and those most ugly indignities of shame for us? 'Greater love,' said he, 'hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' But that God should lay down his life, should pour forth his blood, should be aspersed with the worst crimes, and clothed with foulest shame, should be executed on a cross as a malefactor and a slave, for his enemies and rebellious traitors, what imagination can devise any expression of charity or friendship comparable to this? Wherefore if love naturally be productive of love, if friendship justly meriteth a correspondence in good-will, what effect should the consideration of so ineffable a love, of so unparalleled friendship, have on us!

How can any serious reflexion on this event fail to work hearty gratitude in us toward our good Lord? For put case any person for our sake (that he might rescue us from the greatest mischiefs, and purchase for us the highest benefits) willingly should deprive himself of all his estate, (and that a very large one,) of his honor, (and that a very high one,) of his ease and pleasure, (and those the most perfect and assured that could be;) that he should expose himself to the greatest hazards, should endure the sorest pains and most disgraceful ignominies; should prostitute his life, and in most hideous manner lose it, merely for our sake: should we not then apprehend and confess ourselves monstrously ingrateful, if we did not most deeply resent such kindness; if on all occasions we did not express our thankfulness for it; if we did not ever readily yield all the acknowlegement and all the requital we were able? The case in regard to our blessed Saviour is like in kind; but in degree, whatever we can suppose doth infinitely fall below the performances of him for us, who stooped from the top of heaven, who laid aside the majesty and the felicity of God, for the infamies and the dolors of a cross, that he might redeem us from the torments of hell, and instate us in the joys of paradise. So that our obligations of gratitude to him are unexpressibly

great; and we cannot with any face deny ourselves to be most basely unworthy, if the effects in our heart and life be not answerable.

Nor should we forget that also on this account we do owe great love and thanks to God the Holy Ghost, who, as he did originally conspire in the wonderful project of our redemption, as he did executively by miraculous operation conduct our Saviour into his fleshly tabernacle, as he did by unmeasurable communications of divine virtue assist his humanity through all the course of his life; so in this juncture he did inspire him with charity more than human, and did support him to undergo those pressures with invincible patience; and so did sanctify all this sacerdotal performance, that our Lord, as the Apostle doth affirm, 'did through the eternal Spirit offer himself without spot to God.'

2. What surer ground can there be of faith in God, what stronger encouragement of hope, than is suggested by this consideration? For if God steadfastly did hold his purpose, and faithfully did accomplish his word in an instance so distasteful to his own heart and bowels; how can we ever suspect his constancy and fidelity in any case? how can we distrust the completion of any divine promise?

'If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us,' to the suffering of so contumelious affliction; how can we any ways be diffident of his bounty, or despair of his mercy? how, as the Apostle doth argue, 'shall he not also with him freely give us all things?'

If ever we be tempted to doubt of God's goodness, will not this experiment thereof convince and satisfy us? For what higher kindness could God express, what lower condescension could he vouchsafe, by what pledge could he more clearly or surely testify his willingness and his delight to do us good, than by thus ordering his dearest Son to undergo such miseries for us?

If the greatness of our sins discourageth us from entertaining comfortable hopes of mercy, will it not rear our hearts, to consider that such a punishment hath been inflicted to expiate them, which might content the most rigorous severity; that such a price is laid down to 'redeem us from the curse,' which

richly may suffice to discharge it; that such a sacrifice hath been offered, which God hath avowed for most available, and acceptable to himself? So that now what can justice exact more from us? What have we farther to do, than with a penitent and thankful heart to embrace the mercy purchased for us! Who is he that condemneth, seeing Christ hath died, and hath his own self borne our sins in his own body on the tree! Whatever the wounds of our conscience be, is not the blood of the cross, tempered with our hearty repentance, and applied by a lively faith, a sovereign balsam, of virtue sufficient to cure them? And may we not 'by his stripes be healed!' Have we not abundant reason, with the holy Apostle, to 'joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom we have received the atonement?' Is it not to depreciate the worth, to disparage the efficacy of our Lord's passion, any ways to despair of mercy, or to be disconsolate for guilt; as if the cross were not enough worthy to compensate for our unworthiness, or our Saviour's patience could not balance our disobedience?

3. It indeed may yield great joy and sprightly consolation to us, to contemplate our Lord on the cross, exercising his immense charity toward us, transacting all the work of our redemption, defeating all the enemies, and evacuating all the obstacles of our salvation.

May we not delectably consider him as there stretching forth his arms of kindness, with them to embrace the world, and to receive all mankind under the wings of his protection? as there spreading out his hands, with them earnestly inviting and intreating us to accept the overtures of grace, procured by him for us?

Is it not sweet and satisfactory, to view our great High Priest on that high altar offering up his own pure flesh, and pouring out his precious blood, as an universal complete sacrifice, propitiatory for the sins of mankind?

Is it not a goodly object to behold humility and patience so gloriously rearing themselves above all worldly, all infernal pride and insolence; by the cross ascending unto the celestial throne of dignity and majesty superlative?

Is it not pleasant to contemplate our Lord there standing erect, not only as a resolute sufferer, but as a noble conqueror,

where 'having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a solemn show, triumphing over them?' Did ever any conqueror, loftily seated in his triumphal chariot, yield a spectacle so gallant and magnificent? Was ever tree adorned with trophies so pompous and splendid?

To the exterior view and carnal sense of men, our Lord was then indeed exposed to scorn and shame; but to spiritual and sincere discerning, all his and our enemies did there hang up as objects of contempt, utterly overthrown and undone.

There the devil, that strong and sturdy one, did hang up bound in chains, disarmed and rifled, quite baffled and confounded, mankind being rescued from his tyrannic power.

There the world, with its vain pomps, its counterfeit beauties, its bewitching pleasures, its fondly admired excellences, did hang up, all defaced and disparaged; as it appeared to St. Paul: for 'God,' saith he, 'forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.'

There, in a most lively representation, and most admirable pattern, was exhibited 'the mortification of our flesh, with its affections and lusts;' and our 'old man was crucified, that the body of sin might be destroyed.'

There our sins, being, as St. Peter telleth us, 'carried up by him unto the gibbet,' did hang as marks of his victorious prowess, as malefactors by him 'condemned in the flesh,' as objects of our horror and hatred.

There death itself hung gasping, with its sting pulled out, and all its terrors quelled; his death having prevented ours, and induced immortality.

There all wrath, enmity, strife, (the banes of comfortable life,) did hang 'abolished in his flesh,' and 'slain on the cross, by the blood whereof he made peace, and reconciled all things in heaven and earth.'

There manifold yokes of bondage, instruments of vexation, and principles of variance, even all 'the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us,' did hang up, 'cancelled and nailed to the cross.'

So much sweet comfort by special consideration may be extracted from this event, which in appearance was most doleful,

but in effect the most happy that ever by Providence was dispensed to the world. Farther,

4. This consideration is most useful to render us very humble and sensible of our weakness, our vileness, our wretchedness. For how low was that our fall, from which we could not be raised without such a depression of God's only Son? How great is that impotency, which did need such a succor to relieve it? How abominable must be that iniquity, which might not be expiated without so costly a sacrifice? How deplorable is that misery, which could not be removed without commutation of so strange a suffering? Would the Son of God have so emptied and abased himself for nothing? Would he have endured such pains and ignominies for a trifle? No, surely; if our guilt had been slight, if our case had been tolerable, the divine wisdom would have chosen a more cheap and easy remedy for us.

Is it not madness for us to be conceited of any worth in ourselves, to confide in any merit of our works, to glory in any thing belonging to us, to fancy ourselves brave, fine, happy persons, worthy of great respect and esteem; whenas our unworthiness, our demerit, our forlorn estate did extort from the most gracious God a displeasure needing such a reconciliation, did impose on the most glorious Son of God a necessity to undergo such a punishment in our behalf?

How can we reasonably pretend to any honor, or justly assume any regard to ourselves, whenas the first-born of heaven, 'the Lord of glory,' partaker of divine majesty, was fain to 'make himself of no reputation,' to put himself into 'the garb of a servant,' and, under the imputation of a malefactor, to bear such disgrace and infamy in our room, in lieu of the confusion due to us?

What more palpable confutation can there be of human vanity and arrogance, of all lofty 'imaginations,' all presumptuous confidences, all turgid humors, all fond self-pleasings and self-admirings, than is that tragical cross, wherein, as in a glass, our foul deformity, our pitiful meanness, our helpless infirmity, our sad wofulness are so plainly represented?

Well surely may we say with St. Austin, 'let man now at length blush to be proud, for whom God is made so humble.'

[And since, as he doth add, 'this great disease of soul did bring down the almighty physician from heaven, did humble him to the form of a servant, did subject him to contumelies, did suspend him on a cross, that this tumor by virtue of so great a medicine might be cured;] may not he well be presumed incurable, who is not cured of his pride by this medicine; in whom neither the reason of the case, nor the force of such an example, can work humility?

5. But farther, while this contemplation doth breed sober humility, it also should preserve us from base abjectness of mind; for it doth evidently demonstrate, that, according to God's infallible judgment, we are very considerable; that our souls are capable of high regard; that it is a great pity we should be lost and abandoned to ruin. For surely, had not God much esteemed and respected us, he would not for our sakes have so debased himself, or deigned to endure so much for our recovery; divine justice would not have exacted or accepted such a ransom for our souls, had they been of little worth. We should not therefore slight ourselves, nor demean ourselves like sorry contemptible wretches, as if we deserved no consideration, no pity from ourselves; as if we thought our souls not worth saving, which yet our Lord thought good to purchase at so dear a rate. By so despising or disregarding ourselves, do we not condemn the sentiments, do we not vilify the sufferings of our Lord; so with a pitiful meanness of spirit joining the most unworthy injustice and ingratitude? Again,

6. How can we reflect on this event without extreme displeasure against, and hearty detestation of our sins? those sins which indeed did bring such tortures and such disgraces on our blessed Redeemer? Judas, the wretch who betrayed him; the Jewish priests who did accuse and prosecute him; the wicked rout which did abusively insult over him; those cruel hands that smote him; those pitiless hearts that scorned him; those poisonous tongues that mocked him and reviled him; all those who were the instruments and abettors of his affliction, how do we loath and abhor them! How do we detest their names and execrate their memories! But how much greater reason have we to abominate our sins, which were the true, the principal actors of all that woful tragedy! 'He was delivered for our

offences:' they were indeed the traitors, which by the hands of Judas delivered him up. 'He that knew no sin, was made sin for us;' that is, was accused, was condemned, was executed as a sinner for us. It was therefore we, who by our sins did impeach him; the spiteful priests were but our advocates: we by them did adjudge and sentence him; Pilate was but drawn in against his will and conscience to be our spokesman in that behalf: we by them did inflict that horrid punishment on him; the Roman executioners were but our representatives therein. 'He became a curse for us;' that is, all the mockery, derision, and contumely he endured, did proceed from us; the silly people were but properties acting our parts. Our sins were they that cried out, *crucifige!* ('Crucify him, crucify him,') with clamors more loud and more importunate than did all the Jewish rabble; it was they, which by the borrowed throats of that base people did so outrageously persecute him. 'He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities:' it was they, which by the hands of the fierce soldiers, and of the rude populace, as by senseless engines, did buffet and scourge him; they by the nails and thorns did pierce his flesh, and rend his sacred body. On them, therefore, it is most just and fit that we should turn our hatred, that we should discharge our indignation.

7. And what in reason can be more powerful toward working penitential sorrow and remorse, than reflexion on such horrible effects, proceeding from our sins? How can we forbear earnestly to grieve, considering ourselves by them to have been the perfidious betrayers, the unjust slanderers, the cruel persecutors and barbarous murderers of a person so innocent and lovely, so good and benign, so great and glorious; of God's own dear Son, of our best friend, of our most gracious Redeemer?

8. If ingenuity will not operate so far, and hereby melt us into contrition; yet surely this consideration must needs affect us with a religious fear. For can we otherwise than tremble to think on the heinous guilt of our sins, on the dreadful fierceness of God's wrath against them, on the impartial severity of divine judgment for them, all so manifestly discovered, all so livelily set forth in this dismal spectacle? If the view of an

ordinary execution is apt to beget in us some terror, some dread of the law, some reverence toward authority; what awful impressions should this singular example of divine justice work on us?

How greatly we should be moved thereby, what affections it should raise in us, we may even learn from the most inanimate creatures; for the whole world did seem affected thereat with horror and confusion; the frame of things was discomposed and disturbed; all nature did feel a kind of compassion and compunction for it. The sun (as from aversion and shame) did hide his face, leaving the world covered for three hours with mournful blackness; the bowels of the earth did yearn and quake; the rocks did split; the veil of the temple was rent; the graves did open themselves, and the dead bodies were roused up. And, can we then (who are the most concerned in the event) be more stupid than the earth, more obdurate than rocks, more drowsy than interred carcases, the most insensible and immovable things in nature? But farther,

9. How can the meditation on this event do otherwise than hugely deter us from all wilful disobedience and commission of sin? For how thereby can we violate such engagements, and thwart such an example of obedience? How thereby can we abuse so wonderful goodness, and disoblige so transcendent charity? How thereby can we reject that gentle dominion over us, which our Redeemer did so dearly purchase, or renounce the Lord that bought us at so high a rate?' With what heart can we bring on the stage, and act over that direful tragedy, renewing all that pain and all that disgrace to our Saviour; as the Apostle teacheth that we do by apostacy, 'crucifying to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame?' Can we without horror 'tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing;' (as the same divine Apostle saith all wilful transgressors do;) vilifying that most sacred and precious blood, so freely shed for the demonstration of God's mercy, and ratification of his gracious intentions toward us, as a thing of no special worth or consideration; despising all his so kind and painful endeavors for our salvation; defeating his most charitable purposes and earnest desires for our welfare; rendering

all his so bitter and loathsome sufferings in regard to us utterly vain and fruitless, yea indeed very hurtful and pernicious? For if the cross do not save us from our sins, it will much aggravate their guilt, and augment their punishment; bringing a severer condemnation, and a sadder ruin on us. Again,

10. This consideration affordeth very strong engagements to the practice of charity towards our neighbor. For what heart can be so hard, that the blood of the cross cannot mollify into a charitable and compassionate sense? Can we forbear to love those, toward whom our Saviour did bear so tender affection, for whom he was pleased to sustain so woful tortures and indignities? Shall we not, in obedience to his most urgent commands, in conformity to his most notable example, in grateful return to him for his benefits, who thus did gladly suffer for us, discharge this most sweet and easy duty towards his beloved friends? Shall we not be willing, by parting with a little superfluous stuff for the relief of our poor brother, to requite and gratify him, who, to succor us in our distress, most bountifully did part with his wealth, with his glory, with his pleasure, with his life itself? Shall we not meekly comport with an infirmity, not bear a petty neglect, not forgive a small injury to our brother, whenas our Lord did for us and from us bear a cross, to procure remission for our innumerable most heinous affronts and offences against Almighty God? Can a heart void of mercy and pity, with any reason or modesty pretend to the mercies and compassions of the cross? Can we hope that God for Christ's sake will pardon us, if we for Christ's sake will not forgive our neighbor?

Can we hear our Lord saying to us, 'This is my command, that ye love one another, as I have loved you;' and, 'Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another?' Can we hear St. Paul exhorting, 'Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour;' and, 'We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak—for even Christ pleased not himself, but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me?' Can we attend to St. John's arguing, 'Beloved, if God so loved us, then ought we also to love one another.' 'Hereby we perceive

the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: wherefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren?'

Can we, I say, consider such precepts and such discourses without effectually being disposed to comply with them for the sake of our crucified Saviour? all whose life was nothing else but one continual recommendation and enforcement of this duty; but his death especially was a pattern most obliging, most incentive thereto. This use of the point is the more to be regarded, because the Apostle doth apply it thereto, our text coming in on that occasion; for having pathetically exhorted the Philippians to all kinds of charity and humble condescension, he subjoineth, 'Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God,' &c.

11. But farthermore, what can be more operative than this point toward breeding a disregard of this world, with all its deceitful vanities and mischievous delights; toward reconciling our minds to the worst condition into which it can bring us; toward supporting our hearts under the heaviest pressures of affliction which it can lay on us? For can we reasonably expect, can we eagerly affect, can we ardently desire great prosperity, whenas the Son of God, our Lord and Master, did only taste such adversity? How can we refuse, in submission to God's pleasure, contentedly to bear a slight grievance, whenas our Saviour gladly did bear a cross, infinitely more distasteful to carnal will and sense than any that can befal us? Who now can admire those splendid trifles which our Lord never did regard in his life, and which at his death only did serve to mock and abuse him? Who can relish those sordid pleasures of which he living did not vouchsafe to taste, and the contraries whereof he dying chose to feel in all extremity? Who can disdain or despise a state of sorrow and disgrace, which he, by voluntary susception of it, hath so dignified and graced; by which we so near resemble and become conformable to him; by which we concur and partake with him; yea, by which in some cases we may promote, and after a sort complete his designs, 'filling up,' as St. Paul speaketh, 'that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh?'

Who now can hugely prefer being esteemed, approved, favored, commended by men, before infamy, reproach, derision,

and persecution from them; especially when these do follow conscientious adherence to righteousness? Who can be very ambitious of worldly honor and repute, covetous of wealth, or greedy of pleasure, who doth observe the Son of God choosing rather to hang on a cross than to sit on a throne; inviting the clamors of scorn and spite, rather than acclamations of blessing and praise; divesting himself of all secular power, pomp, plenty, conveniences, and solaces; embracing the garb of a slave, and the repute of a malefactor, before the dignity and respect of a prince, which were his due, which he most easily could have obtained?

Can we imagine it a very happy thing to be high and prosperous in this world, to swim in affluence and pleasure? Can we take it for a misery to be mean and low, to conflict with some wants and straits here; seeing the Fountain of all happiness did himself purposely condescend to so forlorn a state, and was pleased to become so deep a sufferer? If with devout eyes of our mind we do behold our Lord hanging naked on a gibbet, besmeared all over with streams of his own blood, groaning under smart anguish of pain, encompassed with all sorts of disgraceful abuses, 'yielding (as it was foretold of him) his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them who plucked off the hair, hiding not his face from shame and spitting;' will not the imagination of such a spectacle dim the lustre of all earthly grandeurs and beauties, damp the sense of all carnal delights and satisfactions, quash all that extravagant glee which we can find in any wild frolics or riotous merriments? Will it not stain all our pride, and check our wantonness? Will it not dispose our minds to be sober, placing our happiness in things of another nature, seeking our content in matters of higher importance; preferring obedience to the will of God before compliance with the fancies and desires of men; according to that precept of St. Peter, 'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind —so as no longer to live the remaining time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God?'

12. This indeed will instruct and incline us cheerfully to submit unto God's will, and gladly to accept from his hand whatever he disposeth, however grievous, and afflictive to our

natural will; this point suggesting great commendation of afflictions, and strong consolation under them. For if such hardship was to our Lord himself a school of duty, he, as the Apostle saith, 'learning obedience from what he suffered;' if it was to him a fit mean of perfection, as the Apostle doth again imply when he saith, 'that it became God to perfect the Captain of our salvation by suffering;' if it was an attractive of the divine favor even to him, as those words import, 'Therefore the Father loveth me, because I lay down my life:' if it was to him a step toward glory, according to that saying, 'Was not Christ to suffer, and so to enter into his glory?' yea, if it was a ground of conferring on him a sublime pitch of dignity above all creatures, 'God for this obedience having exalted him, and given him a name above all names;' 'We seeing Jesus—for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor;' the heavenly society in the Revelations with one voice crying out, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain (who redeemed us to God by his blood) to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing;' if affliction did minister such advantages to him; and if by our conformity to him in undergoing it, (with like equanimity, humility, and patience,) it may afford the like to us; what reason is there that we should anywise be discomposed at it, or disconsolate under it? Much greater reason, surely, there is, that, with St. Paul and all the holy Apostles, we should rejoice, boast, and exult in our tribulations: far more cause we have, with them, to esteem it a favor, a privilege, an ornament, a felicity to us, than to be displeased and discontented therewith.

To do thus is a duty incumbent on us as Christians. For, 'He,' saith our Master, 'that doth not take up his cross, and follow me, is not worthy of me:' 'He that doth not carry his cross, and go after me, cannot be my disciple.' He that doth not willingly take the cross, when it is presented to him by God's hand; he that doth not contentedly bear it, when it is by Providence imposed on him, is nowise worthy of the honor to wait on Christ; he is not capable to be reckoned among the disciples of our heavenly Master. He is 'not worthy of Christ,' as not having the courage, the constancy, the sincerity of a Christian; or of one pretending to such great benefits, such

high privileges, such excellent rewards, as Christ our Lord and Saviour doth propose. He 'cannot be Christ's disciple,' showing such an incapacity to learn those needful lessons of humility and patience, dictated by him; declaring such an indisposition to transcribe those copies of submission to the divine will, self-denial, and self-resignation, so fairly set him by the instruction and example of Christ: for, 'Christ,' saith St. Peter, 'suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.'

13. The willing susception and the cheerful sustenance of the cross, is indeed the express condition, and the peculiar character of our Christianity; in signification whereof, it hath been from most ancient times a constant usage to mark those who enter into it with the figure of it. The cross, as the instrument by which our peace with God was wrought, as the stage whereon our Lord did act the last part of his marvellous obedience, consummating our redemption, as the field wherein the Captain of our salvation did achieve his noble victories, and erect his glorious trophies over all the enemies thereof, was well assumed to be the badge of our profession, the ensign of our spiritual warfare, the pledge of our constant adherence to our crucified Saviour; in relation to whom our chief hope is grounded, our great joy and sole glory doth consist: for, 'God forbid,' saith St. Paul, 'that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.'

14. Let it be 'to the Jews a scandal,' (or offensive to their fancy, prepossessed with expectations of a Messias flourishing in secular pomp and prosperity;) let it be 'folly to the Greeks,' (or seem absurd to men puffed up and corrupted in mind with fleshly notions and maxims of worldly craft, disposing them to value nothing which is not grateful to present sense or fancy,) that God should put his own most beloved Son into so very sad and despicable a condition; that salvation from death and misery should be procured by so miserable a death; that eternal joy, glory, and happiness, should issue from these fountains of sorrow and shame; that a person in external semblance devoted to so opprobrious usage, should be the Lord and Redeemer of mankind, the King and Judge of all the world: let, I say, this doctrine be scandalous and distasteful to some per-

sons tainted with prejudice; let it be strange and incredible to others blinded with self-conceit; let all the inconsiderate, all the proud, all the profane part of mankind openly with their mouth, or closely in heart, slight and reject it: yet to us it must appear grateful and joyous; to us it is πιστὸς λόγος, a faithful and most credible 'proposition worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,' in this way of suffering for them: to us, who discern by a clearer light, and are endowed with a purer sense, kindled by the divine spirit; from whence we may with comfortable satisfaction of mind apprehend and taste, that God could not in a higher measure, or fitter manner, illustrate his glorious attributes of goodness and justice, his infinite grace and mercy toward his poor creatures, his holy displeasure against wickedness, his impartial severity in punishing iniquity and impiety, or in vindicating his own sacred honor and authority, than by thus ordering his only Son, clothed with our nature, to suffer for us; that also true virtue and goodness could not otherwise be taught, be exemplified, be commended and impressed with greater advantage.

Since thereby indeed a charity and humanity so unparalleled, (far transcending theirs who have been celebrated for devoting their lives out of love to their country, or kindness to their friends,) a meekness so incomparable, a resolution so invincible, a patience so heroical, were manifested for the instruction and direction of men; since never were the vices and the vanities of the world (so prejudicial to the welfare of mankind) so remarkably discountenanced; since never any suffering could pretend to so worthy and beneficial effects, the expiation of the whole world's sins, and reconciliation of mankind to God, the which no other performance, no other sacrifice did ever aim to procure; since, in fine, no virtue had ever so glorious rewards, as sovereign dignity to him that exercised it, and eternal happiness to those that imitate it; since, I say, there be such excellent uses and fruits of the cross borne by our Saviour; we can have no reason to be offended at it, or ashamed of it; but with all reason heartily should approve and humbly adore the deep wisdom of God, together with all other his glorious

attributes displayed therein. To whom therefore, as is most due, let us devoutly render all glory and praise. And,

'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.' 'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXXIII.

COLOSSIANS, CHAP. III.—VERSE 17.

THIS duty enjoined by the Apostle, is one of large extent and extreme importance, to the performance of which we are under the strongest obligations. But first we must understand what it is, the phrase, *doing in the name of Jesus*, being somewhat ambiguous, and capable of different meanings. Certain senses of it stated, which in the present case cannot be admitted. Others, and those suitable ones, represented in order.

I. To do in another's name, sometimes signifies to do it out of affection or honor to another; for another's sake, because we love or esteem him. Instance of this usage. And thus surely we ought to do every thing in Jesus's name: all our actions ought to proceed from a principle of grateful love and reverence towards our gracious Redeemer: this point enlarged on.

II. To do in another's name implies, doing chiefly for the interest and advantage of another, as his servants or factors: for when the business is another's, and also the fruit or benefit arising from it, he that prosecutes that business may well be, and is commonly, supposed to act in that other's name. Instance of our Saviour so acting, John vii. 18. and thus, in imitation of him, ought we also to do all things in his name, remembering that we *are not our own men, but the servants of Jesus, &c.*

III. It imports, frequently, doing by the appointment and command, or by the commission and authority of another: see Acts iv. 7. And thus we are bound to do all things in the

name of Jesus, regulating all our actions by his law, conforming our lives to his will, and acting according to the rules of his will and his example: for what is done beside his warrant and will, cannot be rightly esteemed done *in his name*, and will not be accepted by him.

IV. Hereto we may add that what we do in imitation of Jesus, and in conformity with his practice, we may be said peculiarly to do in his name. As a picture is wont to bear his name whom it is made to represent, and whom it resembles, so if we set Christ's example before us, and endeavor to transcribe it, if our life, in its principal lineaments, resembles his holy life, it may well bear his name: this point enlarged on.

V. To do in another's name sometimes imports, doing by any power derived from, or virtue imparted by, another. *Through thee*, says the psalmist, *will we push down our enemies; in thy name will we throw down those that hate us.* So did the Apostles cast out devils, and do other miracles, *in the name of Jesus*: also with expectation of aid, or hope of good success, from him. And thus also it is our duty to do all things in our Saviour's name; with faith and hope in him, relying on him for direction and assistance, expecting from him only a blessing and happy issue of our undertakings: this subject enlarged on, and the folly and arrogance of relying on our own efforts and powers exposed.

VI. To do in another's name may denote, to act with such regard to another, that we acknowlege our hope of prospering in what we do, our expectation of acceptance and reward, to be grounded on him; that they are procured by his merits and means, are bestowed only for his sake. Thus our Saviour bids us *offer up prayers in his name*, John xiv. 13; that is, representing to God his meritorious performances in our behalf, as the ground of our access to him, and of our hope to obtain from him what we want. So also we are enjoined *to give thanks in his name*, Eph. v. 20. This point enlarged on.

VII. Lastly, to do in the name of Jesus may well imply doing with invocation of him: thus we may understand that passage of St. James, where the elders are advised *to pray and anoint the sick in the Lord's name;* and thus St. Chrysostom expounds the words. That to do thus is our duty, appears by those frequent injunctions to *pray indesinently*, to *pray always*, to *abide instantly in prayer;* which do not only import that we should pray often, and continue patiently and earnestly in prayer, but that we should annex it to, or interpose it among, all our actions, undertaking nothing of consideration without it, &c. Reasons given why we are concerned to do this: exhortations thereto and examples in the holy Scriptures. Thus should we do all things in the name of Jesus, on all occasions praying to him, or, which is the same thing, to God in his name; which that we are allowed and exhorted to do, is an invaluable privilege. In so many ways and particular respects we may and ought to perform all we do in the name of Jesus: to which considerations may be subjoined one general duty, implied in all and each of them:

VIII. That our Lord Jesus should be frequently, and in a manner continually present to our minds and thoughts. This is plainly implied in the former duties; for how is it possible we should perform all our actions, or utter all our words, with any sort of regard to him, if we seldom think of him? Such is the activity of our minds, that it is easy enough to do this; and in respect of other objects we commonly see that it is done; and whatever we vehemently affect, our mind, however otherwise employed, will be thinking of it: instances of the covetous, the voluptuous, and the studious man. Why then may we not as well direct our minds as often towards our Lord, and mix the remembrance of him with all other employments of our thoughts? For to do so is very requisite and expedient to our good practice. This subject continued to the end.

SERMON XXXIII.

OF DOING ALL IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

COLOSSIANS, CHAP. III.—VERSE 17.

And whatsoever ye do in word, or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

'WHATSOEVER ye do in word, or deed:' a duty we see the Apostle enjoins us of a large extent, and therefore surely of a great importance; indeed of an universal concernment; such as must go along with, must run through all our words and all our actions. We are therefore much obliged, and much concerned to attend thereto, and to practise it carefully. But first we must understand what it is; the doing whereof depends on understanding the sense of that phrase, ('doing in the name of Jesus,') being somewhat ambiguous, and capable of divers meanings; which both in common use and in holy Scripture we find it to bear, different according to the variety of matters or occasions to which it is applied; most of which are comprehended, and, as it were, complicated in that general one, according to which we may be said to do that in another person's name, which we do with any kind of reference or regard to him; such as our relations, or our obligations to that person do require; and the particular nature of the action doth admit. And according to this acception I conceive it safest and best to interpret Saint Paul's meaning here, supposing it to comprehend all the more special and restrained meanings of this phrase, truly applicable to the present matter; of which meanings I shall endeavor in order to propound the chief; and,

together, both to unfold and to inculcate the several respective branches of this duty: yet first of all rejecting one or two, which cannot well be applied to this purpose.

To do in another's name, doth sometime denote the assuming another's person, or pretending to be the same with him, the very He. So, 'many shall come in my name,' prophesied our Saviour, 'saying, I am Christ:' to do thus in Jesus's name, is the part of an Antichrist and an impostor. That sense therefore hath nothing to do here.

Again; to do in another's name, doth often imply doing *alterius loco*, or *vice;* in another's name or stead, as a deputy or substitute; representing the person, or supplying the office of another. So did the prophets 'come, and speak in God's name;' what they declared or enjoined, being therefore said to be declared and enjoined by God himself: 'I spake unto you, rising up early, and speaking,' (viz. by the prophets, whom he sent, and who are said to come and speak in his name.) And thus the Apostles spake in Christ's name: 'We are ambassadors for Christ; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled.' Thus also princes govern, and magistrates execute justice in God's name; whence they are styled gods, as being his lieutenants, administering that judgment which belongs originally and principally to him. Now for this sense, neither is it so proper, or convenient here; it agreeing only to some particular persons, and to some peculiar actions of them; insomuch that others presuming to act, according to that manner or kind, in Jesus's name, shall thereby become usurpers and deceivers. We (and to us all this precept is directed) shall heinously transgress our duty, doing any thing thus in his name, without his letters of credence; without being specially called or sent, or being duly by him authorised thereto.

These and such like senses the present matter doth not well admit: the rest that suit thereto I shall with some distinction in order represent.

I. To do in another's name sometime doth signify to do it out of affection or honor to another; for another's sake, because we love or esteem him; ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι being equivalent to ἕνεκα τοῦ ὀνόματος, and διὰ τὸ ὄνομα. Thus it is said, 'Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name; be-

cause ye are Christ's, (is added by way of interpretation, that is, out of respect to Christ, because of your relation to him,) shall not lose his reward.' And thus surely we ought to do every thing in Jesus's name: all our actions ought to proceed from a principle of grateful love and reverence towards our gracious Redeemer. 'Let all your actions be done in charity,' saith the Apostle; if in charity to our neighbor, then much more in love to him, for whose sake we are especially bound to love our neighbor. On any undertaking, or applying ourselves to action, we should so reflect thereon, as to consider whether that we are going about be apt to please him, and conducible to his honor; if so, remembering what he hath done and suffered for us, (what excellent blessings he hath purchased for us, what exceeding benefits he hath conferred on us,) we should, out of love and respect to him, readily peform it; but if it otherwise appear displeasing or dishonorable to him, we should, from the same principles, carefully decline it. The duty is certain, and the reason thereof evident; for inducement to the practice thereof, observe St. Paul's example; who thus represents himself in the main employment of his life, acting, 'The love of Christ constrains us; judging this, that he died for all, that they who live might not live to themselves, but to him that died and rose for them:' the love of Christ, begot and maintained by a consideration of his great benefits conferred on him, was the spring that set St. Paul on work, that excited and urged him forward to action. Thus doing, we shall do in Jesus's name; but if we act out of love to ourselves, (to promote our own interests, to gratify our own desires, to procure credit or praise to ourselves,) we act only in our own names, and for our own sakes; not in the name, or for the sake of Jesus.

II. To do in another's name implies doing, chiefly, for the interest or advantage of another, on another's behalf or account, as the servants or factors of another. For, when the business is another's, and the fruit or benefit emergent belong to another, he that prosecutes that business may well be, and is commonly, supposed to act in that other's name. Thus our Saviour is in St. John's Gospel expressed to come, to speak, to act in God's name; because he did God's business, ('the work which God gave him to accomplish,') and entirely 'sought the

glory of God,' as he there himself often avouches and professes. And thus, in imitation of him, ought we also to do all things in his name; remembering that we 'are not our own men, but the servants of Jesus,' (servants to him not only by nature, as to our Maker and Preserver, but by purchase, as to our Redeemer, who bought us with the greatest price; and by compact also, we having freely undertaken his service, and expecting wages from him,) that we have therefore no business or employment properly our own, but that all our business is (or should be) to serve him, and promote his glory; 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of our Lord.' Whatever, I say, we do, we therefore should perform it with this formal reference, as it were, toward Jesus, as his servants, from conscience of the duty we owe to him; with intention therein to serve him; in expectation of reward only from him. So doth St. Paul (in prosecution of this same precept) beneath in this chapter enjoin us, that 'whatever we do, we perform it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing (or considering) that from the Lord we shall receive the recompense of the inheritance; for that we serve the Lord Christ.' In like manner otherwhere he teaches us to do what we do, 'not as pleasers of men, (not on any inferior accounts,) but as servants of Christ, knowing and considering that we have a Master in heaven.' But,

III. Doing in another's name imports frequently doing by the appointment and command, or by the commission and authority of another. Ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει, καὶ ἐν ποίῳ ὀνόματι; 'By what power and in what name have ye done these things?' say the high priests to the Apostles; that is, who did appoint or authorise you to do this? Their answer was ready: 'In the name of Jesus,' who had sent, commissionated, and commanded them to preach and propagate that doctrine. And thus we are also bound to do all things in the name of Jesus, regulating all our actions by his law; conforming our whole lives to his will; acting not only out of good principles, (principles of love and conscience,) but according to right rules; the rules of his word and example, which he hath declared and prescribed to us: for what is done beside his warrant and will cannot be rightly esteemed done in his name; will not as so be avowed or ac-

cepted by him; no unjust or impious action will he on any terms countenance or patronise. It was once a famous saying, All mischief begins *in nomine Domini;* and much surely, more than one way, hath been done under the like notion or pretence: but this will not serve to excuse the doing of that, in the day of final reckoning for our actions. For 'there will be many,' we are taught, 'that shall in that day, by specious professions of having done this or that in Christ's name,' veil their transgressions and their neglects of duty, 'saying, Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name prophesied, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful things?' who yet, our Lord himself assures us, shall have this reply made to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' There will be those that shall claim acquaintance with Christ in such terms: 'Lord, we have eaten and drank before thee; and thou hast taught in our streets;' whom yet our Lord will disclaim with a, 'Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.' It is not, we see, prophesying in Christ's name, (or preaching about him,) nor frequent attendance on those who do so, nor speaking much or hearing much concerning him; it is not having great gifts or endowments conferred by Christ, (not even so great as that of working miracles;) it is not familiar converse with Christ, or making frequent addresses to him, that can sanctify all a man's actions, or so entitle them to the name of Christ, as to secure his person from being disavowed and rejected by Christ; it is only the conforming all our actions to his holy laws, that can assure us to be acknowleged and accepted by him. This I could wish they would consider, who seem, by such pretences, to commend or excuse their actions, although otherwise irregular and plainly contrary to the laws of Christ; such as those of being meek and charitable toward all men; living peaceably ourselves, and endeavoring to promote peace among others; abstaining from rash and hard censures, from reviling and defaming others; paying reverence and obedience to superiors; and the like laws of Christ, not only express and manifest, but even of the highest rank and consequence among them; being mainly conducing to that which our Lord especially tenders, the public welfare and benefit of mankind; the

violation whereof cannot be justified by pretending any special regard whatever to Christ, or any collateral performances done, whether truly or seemingly, in his name. We do but deceive ourselves, if we conceit that, because we think much, or speak much of Jesus, or have a zeal for something good, all our actions are done in his name: no, it only can be justly impressed on, can warrant and sanctify actions truly good and agreeable to his law; it were an abuse and forgery to do it, like stamping the king's name or image on counterfeit metal; on brass or tin, instead of gold or silver. Good intention and good principles are indeed, as it were, the form and soul of good actions; but their being just and lawful are the body and matter of them; necessarily also concurring to their essence and integrity; they cannot subsist without it, but must pass, as it were, for ghosts and shadows. We are therefore concerned in all our doings to have an especial regard to Christ's law as their rule; that will render them capable of Christ's name, and denominate them Christian.

IV. Hereto we may add that what we do in imitation of Jesus, and in conformity to his practice, (that living rule and copy proposed to us,) we may be said peculiarly to do in his name. As a picture useth to bear his name, whom it was made to represent, and whom it resembles; so if we set Christ's example before us, and endeavor to transcribe it; if our life, in the principal lineaments of sanctity and goodness, do resemble his holy life; they may well bear his name. But if our practice be unlike and unsuitable to his, we cannot affix his name thereto without great presumption and abuse; such as would be committed, if to a draught of foul hue and ugly features we should attribute the name of some most handsome and goodly person, of high worth and quality. To do thus in Jesus's name (with such a regard to him) is a duty often prescribed to us, not only as relating to some cases and actions, (as when his charity, his patience, his humility, his meekness, are signally commended to our imitation,) but generally, 'he, that saith he abideth in him, ought as he walked, so himself also to walk;' that is, whoever professes himself a Christian ought to conform the whole tenor of his conversation to that of Jesus; to endeavor in every imitable perfection to resemble

him. So that whenever we undertake any action, we should do well to look on this pattern; thus, as it were, examining and inquiring of ourselves: What did my Master in this or the like case? Do I do the same thing, do I act from the same principles, do I proceed in the same manner as he did? Am I herein his disciple and follower? If so, in his name let me go on cheerfully; if not, let me forbear. Doing thus will not be only according to our duty, but an especial help and furtherance of good practice.

V. To do in another's name doth sometimes import doing by any power derived or virtue imparted by another; for that a thing so done may be imputed, should be ascribed to that other. So, 'through thee,' saith the psalmist, 'will we push down our enemies; in thy name will we throw down those that hate us:' (through thee and in thy name signify the same thing.) So did the Apostles cast out devils, and perform their other miracles, in Jesus's name, (*διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος*, 'by his name,' it is sometime expressed,) that is, by a divine virtue imparted from him. To this I add another acception, scarce different (at least as to our purpose) from that, according to which doing in another's name signifies doing it in trust, or confidence reposed on another, with expectation of aid, or hope of good success from another. So, 'we rest on thee,' said good King Asa, 'and in thy name we go against this multitude;' in thy name, that is, hoping for assistance and success from thee. And thus it is said that 'David went out against Goliath in the name of the Lord of hosts;' that is, confiding in God's help, as his only weapon and defence: thus also did the holy Apostles work their miracles in Jesus' name, *ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ*, 'by faith in his name,' saith St. Peter, 'his name hath made this man strong;' that is, we did only trust in his divine power, and it was that power of his which restored that weak person to his strength. And thus also is it our duty to do all things in our Saviour's name; with faith and hope in him; wholly relying on him for direction and assistance; expecting from him only a blessing and happy issue of our undertakings. What we do in confidence of our own wisdom or ability, or in affiance on the help of any other person or thing, we do in our own name, or in the name of that thing (or that person) in whom we so

confide; to ourselves, or to such auxiliaries, we shall be ready to attribute the success, and to render the glory of the performance; 'glorying in our own arm, and sacrificing to our net.' But what we undertake only depending on our Lord for ability and success, may therefore bear his name, because our faith derives the power from him, which enables us happily to perform it; so that the performance may truly be attributed to him, and to him we shall be apt to ascribe it. And thus, I say, we are certainly obliged to do every thing in his name, (in his name alone,) retaining a constant sense both of our own infirmity, and of the impotency of all other created things, and consequently a total diffidence both in ourselves and in them; but reposing all our trust in the direction and assistance of our all-wise and almighty Lord; of Jesus, to 'whom all power in heaven and earth is given,' (who indeed had it originally by nature as God; but also farther hath acquired it by desert and purchase;) into whose hands all things are given; and all things are put under his feet; who hath obtained this power in design to use it for our good; and is thereby always ready to help us in our need, if we have recourse unto him, and rely on him; making him what St. Paul styles him, 'our hope;' our only hope; renouncing all other confidences not subordinate to him. To do so is a duty evidently grounded as well on the reason of the thing, as on the will and command of God; to do otherwise is no less a palpable folly, than a manifest injury to God. For, in truth, neither have we nor any other created thing any power, other than such as he is pleased freely to dispense; and which is not continually both for its being and its efficacy subject to him, so that he may at his pleasure subtract it, or obstruct its effect: 'no king is saved by the multitude of a host;' 'a mighty man is not delivered by much strength;' 'a horse is a vain thing for safety:' whence it is plain that we cannot on any created power ground a solid assurance of success in any undertaking; it will be 'leaning on a broken reed,' (which cannot support us, and will pierce our hands,) both a vain and a mischievous confidence; that will abuse us, bringing both disappointment and guilt on us; the guilt of wronging our Lord many ways, by arrogating to ourselves, or assigning to others, what he only doth truly deserve, and what peculiarly

of right belongs to him; withdrawing the same from him; implying him unable or unwilling to assist us, and do us good; neglecting to use that strength which he so dearly purchased and so graciously tenders; so disappointing him, and defeating, as it were, his purposes of favor and mercy towards us. On the other side, trusting only on our Saviour, we act wisely and justly, gratefully and officiously; for that, in doing so, we build our hopes on most sure grounds; on a wisdom that cannot be deceived; on a strength that cannot be withstood; on a goodness that hath no limits; on a fidelity that can never fail. For that we act with a humility and sobriety of mind suitable to our condition, and to the reason of things; for that we thereby declare our good opinion of him, as only able, and very willing to do us good; for that we render him his just honor and due; we comply with his earnest desires, we promote his gracious designs of mercy and kindness toward us. Hence is it that every where in holy Scripture God so highly commends, so greatly encourages this duty of trusting alone in him; that he so ill resents, and so strongly deters from the breach or omission thereof: 'thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited.' 'Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit:' thus in that place, thus in innumerable others we are threatened not only with disappointment and bad success in our undertakings, but with severe punishment, if we betake ourselves to other succors, and neglect or distrust, or, in so doing, desert God; but are encouraged, not only with assurance of prosperous success, but of additional rewards, if intirely in our proceedings we depend on and adhere to God. Thus we should do in all, even our most common and ordinary affairs, which no less than the rest are subject to his power, and governed by his care. For you

know how St. James doth reprehend it as a piece of naughty boasting and arrogance, to say, 'the morrow we will go to this city, and stay there a year, and trade and gain:' instead of saying, 'if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that:' that is, to resolve on, undertake, or prosecute any affair, without submission to God's will, and dependence on his providence: but especially we ought, in matters and actions more spiritual, to practise this duty; for that to the performing of these we have of ourselves a peculiar impotence and unfitness; needing therefore a more especial assistance from our Lord; that the success of them more particularly depends on him; that the glory of them in an especial manner is appropriate, and, as it were, consecrate to him.

If it be a folly and a crime to think we can do any thing without God, it is much more so to think we can do any thing good without him; it is an arrogance, it is an idolatry, it is a sacrilege much more vain and wicked to do so. To imagine that we can, by the force of our own reason and resolution, achieve any of those most high and hard enterprises, to which by the rules of virtue and piety we are engaged; that we can, by our own conduct and prowess, encounter and withstand, defeat and vanquish those so crafty, so mighty enemies of our salvation, (our own fleshly desires, the menaces and allurements of the world, the sleights and powers of darkness,) is much a worse presumption, than in other affairs of greatest difficulty to expect success without the divine assistance and blessing, than in other most dangerous battles to think we can, 'by our own bow, and by our own spear, save ourselves;' that we can obtain victory otherwise than from his hand and disposal, who is the Lord of hosts. Reason tells us, and experience also shows, and our Saviour hath expressly said it, That (in these things) without him (without his especial influence and blessing) we can do nothing; he tells us that we are but branches, inserted into him; so that, without continually drawing sap from him, we can have no life or vigor spiritual. The wisest and best of men have, by their practice, taught us to acknowlege so much; to depend wholly on him, to ascribe all to him in this kind. 'Why,' say St. Peter and St. John, 'do ye wonder at this? or why gaze ye on us, as if by our own power,

or piety, we had made this man walk?'—'His name, (the name of Jesus,) through faith in his name, hath made this man strong:' that acknowlegement indeed concerns a miraculous work; but spiritual works are in reality no less, they requiring as much or more of virtue supernatural, or the present interposition of God's hand to effect them; they make less show without, but need as great efficacy within: so our Saviour, it seems, did imply, when he said, 'He that believes in me, the works that I do he shall do, and greater works than these.' Every good and faithful man doth not work miracles; yet somewhat greater, it seems, by the grace of Christ, he performs: however, to these St. Paul referred, when he affirmed, 'I can do all things in Christ that strengtheneth me;' nothing was so hard that he feared to attempt, that he despaired to master and go through with by the help of Christ; and, 'Not,' saith he again, 'that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God:' he was as sensible of his own inability, as he was confident in the gracious help of Christ. Thus should we do all things in the name of Jesus; and it is not only a duty to do it, but it may be a great encouragement to us, that we are capable of doing it; a great comfort to consider that in all honest undertakings we have so ready and so sure an aid to second and further us in them; confiding in which, nothing is so difficult, but we may easily accomplish; (a grain of faith will be able to remove mountains;) nothing is so hazardous, but we may safely venture on; (walking on the sea, treading on serpents and scorpions, daring all the power of the enemy.) In his name we may, if our duty or good reason calls us forth, how small and weak soever, how destitute soever of defensive arms, or weapons offensive, naked and unarmed, with a sling and a stone, go out against the biggest and best armed Philistine, nothing doubting of victory: our weakness itself, if we be humbly conscious and sensible thereof, will be an advantage to us, as it was to St. Paul, to all effects and purposes, 'the grace of our Lord will be sufficient for us,' if we apply it, and trust therein. But farther,

VI. To do in another's name may denote, to do it with such regard to another, that we acknowlege (that, I say, we heartily and thankfully acknowlege) our hope of prospering in what we

do; our expectation of acceptance, favor, or reward to be grounded on him; that they are procured by his merits and means, are bestowed only for his sake. Thus our Saviour bids us to 'offer our prayers in his name:'* that is, representing unto God his meritorious performances in our behalf, as the ground of our access to God, of our hope to obtain from him what we request. So also we are enjoined to 'give thanks in his name;' that is, with persuasion and acknowlegement, that only in respect to him we become capable to receive or enjoy any good thing; that, in effect, all the blessings by divine mercy vouchsafed us have been procured by him for us, are through him conveyed unto us. And thus also we should do all things in the name of Jesus, offering all our deeds to God, as sacrifices and services unworthy of acceptance, both in themselves, and as proceeding from us; but pleasing and acceptable to God only for his sake. We should do well, on all occasions, to remember our natural condition, and the general state of mankind; such as it was before he did undertake, such as it would have continued still, had he not undertaken for it; that our race had forfeited and was fallen from God's favor; having injured him beyond all power of making him any reparation or satisfaction; that thence it was secluded from all means and hopes apparent of happiness, was exposed and tended downright unto misery; that we consequently had no ground to hope that God (from whom, no less in mind and in deed, than by reason of our guilt and state of condemnation, we were estranged) would, in kindness, bestow any good on us, or from us accept favorably any thing we should do. But that, by our Saviour's performances, the case is altered; he, by his intire obedience, having so pleased God, by his patient submission to God's will, having so appeased his anger and satisfied his justice, that God is not only reconciled, but hath an especial favor, bears an earnest good-will toward us. That now the good things we possess, we may truly esteem as blessings, and enjoy them with real comfort, as proceeding from mercy and kindness; now what we honestly endeavor, we may hope shall please God; now we have a free access to God, and may cheerfully present our sacrifices of duty and devotion,

* John xiv. 13. xv. 16. xvi. 23. 24.

with a full persuasion that they shall be accepted. But all this happiness, all these favors and privileges, we must always remember to come from the continued procurement and mediation of the Beloved; so as ever to be ready to acknowlege it, and to return our thanks therefore. To this sense that our Apostle here had an especial regard, the words immediately following imply: 'Doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him;' that is, in all things we do, taking occasion to render thanks to God, as for his sake being merciful and bountiful to us; bestowing on us the good we enjoy, blessing our endeavors, accepting our performances. We must not conceit that any regard, any mercy, any favor, any reward is due to us in equity, is in effect conferred on us, on our own personal score; (for, how mean things are we in comparison of his greatness; how vile and filthy things must we appear to his most pure and all-discerning eyes; how unworthy of his regard and of his affection must we needs take ourselves to be, if we do but well consider, and are acquainted with ourselves?) but that 'in him (that is, for his sake, and by his means) God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings,' in him ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς, God hath favored, and cast his grace on us; valuing us notwithstanding all our imperfections; loving us, notwithstanding all the spots with which we are defiled; notwithstanding all the offences we have committed; for the relation and alliance we have to Jesus. Nor must we look on our services (the best we are able to perform) as in themselves grateful or satisfactory: for all of them, if we mark them well, we shall find not only quite unprofitable to God, but very defective in many respects; for who can say he performs any thing both in kind, in manner, in degree thoroughly right and good; with that ardency of love he owes to God, with that purity of intention, with that earnest vigor of spirit, with that undistractedness of mind with which he should perform it? No; in all our flock we cannot pick out a sacrifice intire and unblemished; such as God requires, such as duty exacts of us. They need therefore (all our services need) to be commended and completed by the beloved Son's perfectly well-pleasing performances; they need to be cleansed and hallowed, by passing through the hands of our most holy and undefiled High Priest; to become sweet and savory (or to

receive that ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας, which St. Paul speaks of) from being offered up in his censer. In fine, as all our actions should, in our intention, be works of religion dedicated to God's service and honor; sacrifices, as it were, of gratitude and homage to God; so they ought all to be offered up in the name of Jesus. I add farther,

VII. Lastly, that to do in the name of Jesus may well imply doing with invocation of him: thus we may understand that place of St. James, where the elders are advised 'to pray, and anoint the sick in the Lord's name,' for, to anoint them, imploring our Lord's blessing on them, and on those means used for their cure. And thus St. Chrysostom* expounds the words: do all in Jesus's name, 'that is,' saith he, 'imploring him for your helper in all things; always first praying to him, undertake your business.' Doing thus will indeed christen and consecrate our actions; for 'all things,' saith our Apostle, 'are sanctified by the word of God and prayer:' that is, by God's blessing implored, and obtained by prayer; or, if God's word be there taken for his law, or revealed will, it is there signified that our actions are not only sanctified by their lawfulness or conformity to that good rule, God's declared will; but also by the invocation of his name; however, all our actions, it seems, are unhallowed and profane, if not accompanied with devotion. That to do thus is our duty, appears by those frequent injunctions, to 'pray indesinently,' to 'pray always,' to 'abide instantly in prayer;' which do not only import that we should pray often, and continue with patience and earnestness in prayer; but that we should annex it to, or interpose it among, all our actions, undertaking nothing (at least of consideration or moment) without it. We should do it (our Saviour commands) ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, that is, 'on every occasion:' and St. Paul gives the same direction; 'Praying,' says he, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ, 'on all opportunities, with all prayer and supplication in spirit;' (in spirit, that is, I take it, 'in our hearts' at least, and with secret elevations of our mind, if not with our mouth and voice.) And more explicitly otherwhere saith he, 'Be careful

* In locum. Αὐτὸν καλῶν βοηθὸν, ἐπὶ πάντων πρότερον αὐτῷ εὐχόμενος, ἅπτου τῶν πραγμάτων.

for nothing, but in every thing (in all your affairs) by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.' And thus to do (to accompany all our undertakings with prayer) we are indeed concerned on many accounts. We need God's direction (being ourselves very blind and ignorant) in the choice of what we attempt; that our ends and designs may be good, conducible to God's honor and our own true advantage. For, as the prophet tells us, 'The way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man that walketh to direct his steps;' and, as the wise man adds, 'Man's goings are of the Lord; how then can a man understand his own way?' (implying, since God only knows what is best for us, that we of ourselves, without his direction, know not what to do, whither to go.) The holy psalmist signifies the same in those words, (very encouraging to the practice of this duty,) 'What man is he that feareth the Lord?' (that feareth him, that is, who worshippeth him, and seeketh his guidance,) 'him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.' We need also (being ourselves not only weak and infirm, but inconstant and unstable) God's assistance and upholding hand in the pursuance of our well-chosen designs, (that we may use the best means, and proceed in a straight course; that we may persist upright and steady in our proceedings,) that which the wise man seems to call the establishing of our thoughts and promises, as a consequence, on our seeking God's assistance in our actions, and relying thereon; 'Commit,' saith he, 'thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established;' (thou shalt drive on thy good purposes steadily, without stumbling or falling; at least irrecoverably.) So the psalmist assures us concerning a good man: 'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; none of his steps shall slide; though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.' We also farther, as to the final success of our affairs, stand in need of God's blessing; that he, on whose will altogether depends the disposal of all events, should bestow a good issue unto our endeavors, that they prove not matter of discouragement or discomfort to us; that which also the psalmist assures us of obtaining, on condition of our imploring and depending on God for it: 'Commit thy way,' saith he, 'unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall

bring it to pass.' We do thus need in all our affairs the direction, assistance, and blessing of our Lord; but shall not have them without prayer; for the rule is, 'Ask and have, seek and find.' Without asking, we are not likely to obtain those gifts; without seeking, we must not hope to find those benefits from God. If we are so proud as to think we do not need them, or so negligent as not to mind them, or so distrustful of the divine power or goodness, that we imagine he cannot or will not afford them to us, we are like to be so unhappy as to want them. God expects from us that we should, in whatever we do, acknowlege him: (it is the wise man's expression, 'In all thy ways acknowlege him, and he shall direct thy paths:') acknowlege him as the only faithful guide and counsellor; as the only sufficient helper and protector; as the only free arbitrator and donor of good success. Nothing therefore is well done which is not thus done: we cannot be satisfied in what we do; we cannot hope for a comfortable end thereof; we cannot expect a blessing from God, if we have refused, or if we have neglected the recommending our proceedings to his care. We can, I say, do nothing; not eat, not sleep, not trade, not travel, not study with any true content, any reasonable security, any satisfactory hope, if we have not first humbly implored God's favor; committing ourselves and our business into his hand, that hand which dispenseth all good, which alone can keep off all danger and mischief from us. 'God shall send his angel before thee:' so did our father Abraham send his servant about his business; having questionless before commended it to God by prayer. 'God Almighty give you mercy before the man:' so did Jacob give his sons their dispatches toward Egypt. In such a manner did we enter on all our affairs, we could not but be full of hope, and void of care concerning them; for that commonly we are so full of anxiety about the event of what we undertake, whence doth it arise, but from our neglect of this duty? for, having committed our business into so sure a hand, how could we farther be solicitous about it? Had we, according to St. Peter's advice, 'cast our care on the Lord;' or, 'cast our burden on him,' (as the psalmist exhorts us;) had we duly sought and invoked him, who 'never faileth them that seek him,' who 'is nigh to all them that call on him;' we should not have such a

load of troublesome care resting on us; our hearts would be light and free as to all these things; we should be secure, that nothing very bad or disastrous could befal us; we should experience it true what the prophet affirms in that prayer or psalm to God; 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.' 'Be careful for nothing,' St. Paul bids us; 'but in every thing let your requests be made known to God:' if we perform the latter part, the former will naturally be consequent thereon. Thus, in the last place, should we do all things in the name of Jesus, (on all occasions praying to him, or, which is all one, to God in his name,) which that we may do, (that we are allowed and encouraged to do it,) is also a privilege, and an advantage unvaluable.

In so many ways and particular respects may we, and ought we to perform all we do in the name of Jesus: we should do every thing out of grateful affection and respect to him, as our chief principle; every thing as his servants, aiming especially at the pleasing of him and promoting his honor, as our principal end; every thing according to his will and commandment, as our constant rule; every thing after his example, as our best pattern; every thing in confidence of his gracious assistance and blessing, as our only strength and support; every thing with hope of acceptance purely on his account; every thing with thankful sense and acknowlegement to God for the mercies and favors conveyed unto us by his means, conferred on us for his sake; every thing with humble invocation of him, or with prayer to God in his name: in sum, every thing with a due and proper regard had to him; so that he be not passed over or left out in any thing we undertake; but come always into consideration, according as our relations to him and our obligations to him do require. In the performances of which duties the life indeed of our religion (of all our good practice, of all our devotion) doth consist.

To all this I shall only subjoin the mention of one general duty, implied in all and each of those we have propounded, which is this:

VIII. That our Lord Jesus should be frequently (and in a manner continually; always, as to the habitual disposition of our souls, actually on all fit occasions) present to our minds

and thoughts. This, I say, is plainly implied in the former duties. For how is it possible we should perform all our actions (yea, utter all our words) with any sort of regard to him, if we seldom think of him? Such is the nimbleness and activity of our minds, that it is feasible enough to do thus; and, in respect to other objects, we commonly experience it done; for *animus est ubi amat;* whatever we affect, our mind, however otherwise employed, will be thinking on it; it is hard to restrain our thoughts from it: (the covetous man's heart will be among his bags; the voluptuous man's mind will be in his dishes; the studious person will be musing on his notions, do he what he can:) why then may we not as well, as often direct our minds toward our Lord, and mix the remembrance of him with all other employments or entertainments of our thoughts? To do so is surely very requisite, and very expedient toward our good practice. Things far distant or long absent can have small efficacy or influence: it is so, we see, in natural, and it is no less so in moral causalities; wherein representation to the fancy and memory have a force answerable to that, which real conjunction and approximation have in nature. As the heat and light of the sun, the farther he goes, and the longer he stays from us, do the more, proportionably, decrease; so, according to our less frequently and less seriously thinking on any object, our affection and our respect thereto decay. If therefore we desire, according to our duty, to maintain in our hearts such dispositions (due affection and due reverence) toward Jesus; if we intend to suit our actions accordingly with due regard to him; we should, in order to those purposes, apply this so necessary and useful mean, of frequently bending our minds toward him; the doing of which, in likelihood, will conduce much to the sanctifying our affections, and to the governing our actions in a constant performance of our duty. For we can hardly sure (admitting we do seriously believe him to be such as we profess to believe him) with any competent attention think of him, but that thought will be apt to restrain us from doing ill, to incite us to do well; since together with that thought, some of his excellent perfections, some of our principal relations, and some of our great obligations to him, (each of which hath much virtue and force to those purposes,)

will interpose and represent themselves. Frequently thinking of him, we shall sometimes apprehend him with incessant toil laboring in the service of God, and in promoting the welfare of men; sometimes we shall imagine him undergoing all kind of contumelies and bitter pains, suffering by the cruel hands and tongues of spiteful men; we shall, as it were, behold him bleeding under the scourge, and hanging on the cross for our sakes. Sometimes he will appear to our minds crowned with majesty, reigning in sovereign power and glory, having all things in subjection under his feet; sometimes also he will be represented as our Judge, before whose tribunal we must all shortly stand, and be obliged to render an account of all our doings: which thoughts passing through our minds, will be apt to make some impression on our hearts, to have some influence on our actions. For can that most amiable and most venerable idea of a person so intirely pure and holy, so meek and humble, so full of benignity and charity toward all men, (particularly toward ourselves,) be otherwise than apt to beget some especial love and reverence toward him; than incline us strongly to do well, yea, than teach us what and how we should do so, in conformity to such a pattern set before us? it occurring to our thoughts that he is our Lord and Master, (who made us, and maintains us; who purchased us to himself, and redeemed us from miserable slavery by his own heart-blood;) how can it fail to raise in us some awe, some sense of duty toward him? Will not the apprehension of what he did and what he suffered for us powerfully mind us, that, according to all justice and equity, in all ingenuity and gratitude, we are bound to do only that which will please him? If we think of Jesus, when we are setting on any action, shall we not thereupon be apt thus to interrogate ourselves? Shall I do otherwise than he did, or would have done, so rendering myself unlike or contrary to him? Shall I be so unfaithful to my glorious Master, as to disserve him, or to neglect his service? Shall I be so unworthy toward my gracious Redeemer, my best friend, my most bountiful benefactor, as to disoblige him, to wrong him, to dishonor him, to grieve him by thus doing? Shall I be so vain and rash as to cross him who is my king, able to control and subdue me; as to offend him who is my judge, resolved to con-

demn and punish me? Shall I wilfully forfeit that friendship and favor of his, on which all my happiness doth depend? Shall I procure his displeasure and enmity, from which my utter ruin must inevitably follow? Such considerations have a natural connexion with our frequent thinking on, and the presence, as it were, of our blessed Saviour to our minds; which therefore may be commended to us as an excellent instrument of bettering our hearts and our lives.

To conclude: Let us all always remember, and consider that we are Christians related unto Christ Jesus, and called by his name, and as so, in his name let us do all things.

'Lord of all power and might; who art the Author and Giver of all good things; graft in our hearts the love of thy name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXXIV.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 16.

ST. PAUL, by an impartial reflexion on his heart and life, being well assured that he, by the divine Spirit, was enlightened with all necessary knowlege, and being conscious of a sincere zeal in himself to honor God and benefit men, knowing that his intentions were pure, his actions warrantable, and the tenor of his life blameless, does on all occasions, not from arrogance or ostentation, but from an earnest desire to glorify God and edify his disciples, describe and set forth his own practice as a rule of life. Instances of this given: so also in the text: which custom of the Apostle chiefly teaches us two things; that we be careful to give, and that we be ready to follow good example: the latter of which duties more directly agreeing with the intent of this passage, is only insisted on here. To which purpose it may be observed,

I. That it is the manner of the Apostles, on all occasions, to inculcate this duty: instances quoted. And wherever the eminent deeds of holy men are mentioned, it is done with an intimation, or tacit supposition, that we are obliged to follow their example.

II. We may consider that to this end the goodness of God has raised up in all ages such excellent persons, furnishing them with rare endowments, and aiding them by his divine grace, not only that they might instruct us with wholesome doctrine, but lead us into the paths of righteousness by good example.

III. These things *are written for our admonition*: it was a special design of God's providence in recording and recom-

mending to our regard the divine histories. They were not framed as fruitless monuments of fame, as objects of curiosity or entertainment; but as copies to transcribe, as lights to guide us in our way to happiness.

IV. We may farther consider that in the nature of the thing itself, good examples are of singular advantage to us, as having a mighty influence on our practice. This shown, 1. by a comparison of them with precepts, as they cause us with more speed, less trouble, and greater efficacy to comprehend things: this instanced in the diagrams of mathematicians, and the models of artificers, &c. The example of Joseph recommended to any one who would learn how to demean himself under the assaults of temptation: the pattern of Moses, to him who would learn wisdom, constancy, and resolution, in the conduct of honest and worthy designs; and that of St. Paul to those who wish for instruction how to discharge faithfully the ministerial or any other office. 2. Good examples do not only inform, but they persuade and incline our reason to good practice, commending it to us by plausible authority; a way of reasoning the most plain, easy, and suitable to all capacities. He who can say that Abraham, or David, or St. Paul, did so and so in such a case, must suppose that he has great reason to do the like: this subject enlarged on. 3. Examples incite our passions, and impel them to the performance of duty. 1. They raise hope by discovering to us, and assuredly proving the probability of good success in good designs, by the best of arguments, experience. 2. They inflame courage, as the Apostle to the Hebrews signifies, when he intimates that he mentions and sets before them the examples of the patriarchs, that he might thereby excite their courage, and cause them resolutely to undertake that obedience, and patiently to undergo those afflictions which they performed and sustained: Heb. vi. 12. 3. They provoke emulation, which is another strong principle of activity, moving us earnestly to desire, and thence eagerly to pursue, whatever

privilege or advantage we see another to enjoy; this point enlarged on. 4. Examples work on modesty, that preserver and guardian of virtue, as Cicero calls it: for every good action of another upbraids, as it were, reproaches, and shames him who does not act conformably thereto. 5. Example awakens that curiosity which is natural to us, and of no mean efficacy on our actions; for whatever we see done, we are apt to be inquisitive concerning it; why and to what purpose it is done, what the grounds of it are, and what the fruits of the performance. 6. Examples also please the mind and fancy in contemplation of them, thence drawing a considerable influence on practice; no kind of studious entertainment being so generally delightful as history, or the tradition of remarkable examples: those of holy men recorded in Scripture considered in this point of view, and compared with such as profane history sets forth. 7. We may furthermore consider that God has provided and recommended to us one example, as a perfect standard of good practice; the example of our Lord. That indeed is the most universal, absolute, and assured pattern; yet doth it not supersede the use of other examples: not only the valor and conduct of the general, but those of inferior officers, yea, the resolution of the common soldiers, serve to animate their fellows. Concluding recommendation, since good examples are of so great use in leading us into the ways of happiness, that we should meditate on them, and zealously strive to imitate them.

SERMON XXXIV.

OF BEING IMITATORS OF CHRIST.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. IV.—VERSE 16.

I beseech you, be followers of mė: or, I exhort you, be imitators of me.

ST. PAUL, by an impartial reflexion on his heart and life, being well assured that he by the divine Spirit was enlightened with a certain knowlege of all necessary truth, and endued with plentiful measures of divine grace; being conscious of a sincere zeal in himself to honor God and benefit men; being satisfied that with integrity he did suit his conversation to the dictates of a good conscience, to the sure rule of God's law, and to the perfect example of his Lord; that his intentions were pure and right, his actions warrantable, and the tenor of his life conspicuously blameless, doth on all occasions (not out of any self-conceitedness, arrogance, or ostentation, from which he, by frequent acknowlegement of his own defects and his miscarriages, and by ascribing all the good he had, or did, to the grace and mercy of God, doth sufficiently clear himself; but from an earnest desire to glorify God, and edify his disciples) describe and set forth his own practice, proposing it as a rule, pressing it on them as an argument, an encouragement, an obligation to the performance of several duties. So by it he directeth and urgeth the Ephesians to a charitable compliance, or complaisance; a sweet and inoffensive demeanor toward other: 'Give no offence,' saith he, 'neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please

all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved: be ye followers of me:' so he guides and provokes the Philippians to endeavors of proficiency in grace, and the study of Christian perfection: 'Nevertheless,' saith he to them, 'whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing: brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark such as walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.' By the like instance and argument, he moveth the Thessalonians to a sober and orderly conversation, to industry in their calling, to self-denial, and a generous disregard of private interest: 'For yourselves,' saith he, 'know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labor and travail day and night, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example to you to follow us.' The same persons he commendeth, as having by this means been induced to a patient constancy in faith and good works: 'Ye know,' saith he, 'what manner of men we were among you for your sake, and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction.' The practice of all virtue and goodness he also thus recommendeth under this rule and obligation: 'Those things, which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.' Thus in our text (referring it to the context) he urgeth the Christians, his disciples at Corinth, to fidelity and diligence in the charges and affairs committed to them, to humility, patience, and charity; wherein he declareth himself to have set before them an evident and exact pattern. Which practice of St. Paul doth chiefly teach us two things; that we be careful to give, and that we be ready to follow good example: the latter of which duties more directly and immediately agreeth to the intent of this place; and it therefore I shall only now insist on: the subject and scope of my discourse shall be to show that it is our duty and concernment to regard the practices of good men, and to follow their example. To which purpose we may observe,

I. That it is the manner of the Apostles on all occasions to inculcate this duty: we heard St. Paul: hear St. James:

'Take,' saith he, 'my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction:' 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy:' and the Apostle to the Hebrews: 'We desire,' saith he, 'that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises:' and again, 'Wherefore, seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.' And St. Peter: 'Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.' And wherever the eminent deeds of holy men are mentioned, it is done with an intimation at least, or tacit supposition, that we are obliged to follow their example.

II. We may consider that to this end (that we might have worthy patterns to imitate) the goodness of God hath raised up in all ages such excellent persons, furnishing them with rare endowments, and with continual influences of his grace assisting them, to this purpose, that they might not only instruct us with wholesome doctrine, but lead us also by good example in the paths of righteousness. For certainly what St. Paul saith concerning the sins and punishments of bad men, is no less applicable to the virtuous deeds and happy examples of good men: 'All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.'

III. 'They are written for our admonition:' it was a special design of God's providence in recording and recommending to our regard the divine histories. They were not framed as monuments of a fruitless memory and fame to them; they were not proposed to us as entertainments of our curiosity, as objects of wonder, as matters of idle discourse; that unconcernedly we should gaze on them, or talk about them, as children look on fine gays: but they are set before us as copies to transcribe, as lights to guide us in our way to happiness. So that if we will not ingratefully frustrate the intentions of divine Provi-

dence for our good, we must dispose ourselves to imitate those illustrious patterns of virtue and piety.

IV. We may farther consider that, in the nature of the thing itself, good example is of singular advantage to us, as being apt to have a mighty virtue, efficacy, and influence on our practice: which consideration should much engage us to regard it, applying it as an instrument of making ourselves good, and consequently of becoming happy. Good example is, as I say, of exceeding advantage to practice on many accounts.

1. Examples do more compendiously, easily, and pleasantly inform our minds, and direct our practice, than precepts, or any other way or instrument of discipline. Precepts are delivered in an universal and abstracted manner, naked, and void of all circumstantial attire, without any intervention, assistance, or suffrage of sense; and consequently can have no vehement operation on the fancy, and soon do fly the memory; like flashes of lightning, too subtle to make any great impression, or to leave any remarkable footsteps, on what they encounter; they must be expressed in nice terms, and digested in exact method; they are various, and in many disjointed pieces conspire to make up an intire body of direction: they do also admit of divers cases, and require many exceptions, or restrictions, which to apprehend distinctly, and retain long in memory, needs a tedious labor, and continual attention of mind, together with a piercing and steady judgment. But good example, with less trouble, more speed, and greater efficacy, causes us to comprehend the business, representing it like a picture exposed to sense, having the parts orderly disposed and completely united, suitably clothed and dressed up in its circumstances; contained in a narrow compass, and perceptible by one glance, so easily insinuating itself into the fancy, and durably resting therein: in it you see at once described the thing done, the quality of the actor, the manner of doing, the minute seasons, measures, and adjuncts of the action; with all which you might not perhaps by numerous rules be acquainted; and this in the most facile, familiar, and delightful way of instruction, which is by experience, history, and observation of sensible events. A system of precepts, though exquisitely compacted, is, in comparison, but a skeleton, a dry, meagre,

lifeless bulk, exhibiting nothing of person, place, time, manner, degree, wherein chiefly the flesh and blood, the colors and graces, the life and soul of things do consist; whereby they please, affect, and move us: but example imparts thereto a goodly corpulency, a life, a motion; renders it conspicuous, specious, and active, transforming its notional universality into the reality of singular subsistence. This discourse is verified by various experience; for we find all masters of art and science explicating, illustrating, and confirming their general rules and precepts by particular examples. Mathematicians demonstrate their theorems by schemes and diagrams, which, in effect, are but sensible instances; orators back their enthymemes (or rational argumentations) with inductions, (or singular examples;) philosophers allege the practice of Socrates, Zeno, and the like persons of famous wisdom and virtue, to authorise their doctrine; politics and civil prudence is more easily and sweetly drawn out of good history, than out of books *de Republica*. Artificers describe models, and set patterns before their disciples, with greater success, than if they should deliver accurate rules and precepts to them. For who would not more readily learn to build, by viewing carefully the parts and frame of a well contrived structure, than by a studious inquiry into the rules of architecture; or to draw by setting a good picture before him, than by merely speculating on the laws of perspective; or to write fairly and expeditely, by imitating one good copy, than by hearkening to a thousand oral prescriptions; the understanding of which, and faculty of applying them to practice, may prove more difficult and tedious, than the whole practice itself as directed by a copy? Neither is the case much different in moral concernments; one good example may represent more fully and clearly to us the nature of a virtue, than any verbose description thereof can do: in sooner time, and with greater ease, we may learn our duty by regarding the deportment of some excellent person, than by attending to many philosophical discourses concerning it:* for

* Xen. Ἀπομν. 4. It was Xenophon's observation, grounded on his own experience, that the memory of Socrates's conversation did greatly profit his acquaintance. Τὸ μεμνῆσθαι μὴ παρόντος οὐ μικρὰ ὠφε-

instance, if we desire to know what faith is, and how we should rely on the divine Providence, let us propose to our consideration the practice of Abraham; wherein we may see the father of the faithful leaving a most pleasant country, the place of his nativity, and questionless most dear unto him under that notion; deserting his home and fixed habitation, his estate and patrimony, his kindred and acquaintance, to wander he knew not where in unknown lands, with all his family, leading an uncertain and ambulatory life in tents, sojourning and shifting among strange people, devoid of piety and civility, (among Canaanites and Egyptians,) on a bare confidence in the Divine protection and guidance: we may see him, aged ninety-nine years, sensible of his own natural impotence, and an equal incapacity in his comfort as to such purposes, yet with a steady belief assuring himself, that from those dead stocks a numerous progeny should spring, and that he, who by all power of nature was unable to beget one child, should, by virtue of God's omnipotent word, become the father of a mighty nation: we may see him on the first summons of the Divine command, without scruple or hesitancy, readily and cheerfully yielding up his only son (the sole ground of his hope and prop of his family, to whose very person the promise of multiplication was affixed) to be sacrificed and slain; not objecting to his own reason the palpable inconsistency of counsels so repugnant, nor anxiously laboring to reconcile the seeming contrariety between the Divine promises and commands; but resolved as it were (with an implicit faith in God) to believe things incredible, and to rely on events impossible: contemplating these things, let us say what discourse could so livelily describe the nature of true faith, as this illustrious precedent doth.

Again, he that would learn how to demean himself in re-

λεῖ τοὺς ἐλαθόντας αὐτῷ συνεῖναι. And Seneca saith, that the crowd of philosophers, which followed the same wise man, derived more of their ethics from his manners than his words: 'plus ex moribus, quam ex verbis Socratis traxit.'—Sen. Ep. 11. And he that shall reflect on the story concerning his behavior, when he was by malicious envy persecuted to death, may perhaps be more edified thereby, than by all his subtle discourses about death, and the soul's state after it.

sisting the assaults of temptation, let him consider that one carriage of Joseph; of him, together withstanding the courtships of an attractive beauty, and rejecting the solicitations of an imperious mistress, advantaged by opportunities of privacy and solitude; when the refusal was attended with extreme danger, and all the mischiefs which the disdain of a furious lust disappointed, of an outrageous jealousy provoked, of a loving master's confidence abused, could produce; and all this by one of meanest condition, in a strange place, where no intercession, favor, or patronage of friends could be had, no equal examination of his cause might be expected; of him doing this, merely on principles of conscience, and out of fear of God; (saying, 'How can I do this great evil, and sin against God?') and he that considers this example, how can he be ignorant of his duty in the like case?

Again, would we learn wisdom, constancy, and resolution in the conduct of honest and worthy designs, let us set before our eyes the pattern of Moses, and therein take notice how he, obeying divine instinct and direction, having embraced that noble purpose of rescuing his countrymen from the Egyptian bondage, of settling them in a method of happy policy, and of bringing them into the promised land of their enjoyment, did behave himself in the execution thereof; with how indefatigable industry he solicited their cause with a fickle and deceitful, stupid and hard-hearted king; enduring frequent disappointments and repulses, together with furious storms of anger, and most terrible menaces from him: how having there surmounted all obstacles, and effectually enlarged the people from their restraint in Egypt, he led them on foot through a valley encompassed with mountains of sea: and after that undertook a tedious march (a march of forty years) through a wild, barren, and dry solitude, (where no water was, but such as issued from the stony bowels of a rock: no food, or means of subsistence, but such as was supplied by the miraculous purveyance of Heaven,) in the meanwhile resisting the continual invasions of open enemies, in great numbers with armed violence striving to obstruct his passage, and defeat his purpose; having also (which was more) his patience constantly exercised in supporting the froward perverseness of a most incredulous and intractable

people, which took all occasions of complaint and mutiny against him; in contesting with the factious rivality of envious nobles, who repined at his successes, and maligned his authority among them: in bearing the indiscreet and untoward prevarications of his own most intimate friends and nearest relations, complying with the wicked humors and desires of the people: in sustaining many other perplexities and crosses; all which notwithstanding, he with insuperable resolution happily achieved his glorious undertaking: and will not this example, attentively regarded, beyond the power of any other means or method, explain to us the way of industry, courage, and perseverance in good and worthy, though high and difficult enterprises?

One instance more, and that of all most pertinent to our occasion; would you be instructed how faithfully to discharge the ministerial or any other office? With a steadfast attention then behold the excellent pattern of St. Paul; consider how in all his designs he zealously and singly aimed at the honor and service of God, neglecting his own safety, quiet, credit, and all worldly accommodations for the advancement of them: how affectionately he tendered the good and welfare of those, the care of whose spiritual condition was commended to him, using all his skill, care, and strength in promoting their edification; declaring himself for their good to be content, not only for a time to be absent from the Lord, being deprived of that happiness which he otherwise impatiently groaned for, and was fully assured of; but desirous, as it seems, to be secluded for ever from his blissful presence, by a dreadful anathema, for their sake: how prudently, meekly, and humbly he demeaned himself toward them; becoming all things to all men, forming himself into all allowable shapes and colors; undergoing all sorts of censure and imputations, (of a despicable, an ignorant, a foolish person:) tempering his speech and deportment to their capacities and needs, bearing their miscarriages, and complying with their weaknesses; parting freely with his own just liberty, pleasure, and satisfaction, for their spiritual advantage: how generously he despised his own profit and ease, refusing that supply he might with all reason and equity have required from them; choosing to maintain himself with the labor of his own

hands, and the sweat of his brows, that he might render the gospel nowise burdensome or offensive to them: how vigilantly and courageously he withstood the mischievous endeavors of false brethren and treacherous seducers; earnestly contending for the church's peace and quiet against factious spirits, and for the substantial truths of the gospel against the pernicious devices of heretics and false teachers: how patiently he sustained all manner of pains, griefs, travels, wants, losses, hazards, distresses, disappointments, affronts, and reproaches, for the honor of God, the benefit of his spiritual children, the discharge of his duty, and satisfaction of his conscience: these things, I say, regard, and then tell me if he might not reasonably inculcate this admonition, 'Imitate me;' and if his example be not of rare use to instruct us how faithfully we should in our respective charges and employments demean ourselves. I might in like manner instance how excellent a rule of devotion the practice of the royal prophet may be unto us; how Elias's practice might teach us to be zealous champions for truth and righteousness; how they who would be good judges, or honest patriots, may receive direction from the carriage of Samuel, Daniel, and Nehemiah. But I proceed to say that, farther,

II. Good examples do not only inform, but they persuade and incline our reason to good practice, commending it to us by plausible authority; a way of reasoning the most plain, easy, and suitable to all men's capacities; less subject to error and doubt than any other in particular cases; whereby as it is always more easy to know what is good and fit, so commonly it is most safe; there being few, who can so well discern what is good, as they may rest in the judgments of others. For that wise and virtuous persons do any thing, is a very probable argument, that we are obliged and concerned to do the like; seeing such persons may in all their actions be supposed to have an unbiassed regard to the rules of truth and justice. He therefore who can say that Abraham, or David, or St. Paul did so in such a case, supposeth that he hath no small reason to do the like; it is accounted pardonable, yea almost commendable, to err with such persons; because it is done with good appearance of reason, seeing such persons were themselves unlikely to err: 'will you,' saith Cicero, 'commemorate to me

Scipio's, and Cato's, and Lælius's, and say they did the same thing; though the thing displeases me, yet I cannot withstand the authority of such men: their authority is so great, that it can cover even the suspicion of a fault.' It is obvious in temporal concernments, how great a stroke this way of discourse hath; how boldly men adventure their dearest interests in following such whom they probably deem honest, and able to guide them: for instance, in travelling, if one being ignorant or doubtful of his way happen to meet a person, whom he conceives able, and nowise concerned or disposed to mislead him, he without scruple follows him, and confidently relies on his direction. In like manner, all good men in the way of virtuous practice tending directly toward happiness, (our common journey's end;) it being their design, their interest, and their endeavor not to mistake the way, not to deflect from the right and nearest course thereto, men are apt to think it reasonable and safe to accompany in their progress, or to press after them in their steps: and surely, next to a clear and certain rule, there is not any more rational warrant for practice, and consequently no better inducement thereto, than such good precedents. Farther,

III. Examples do incite our passions, and impel them to the performance of duty. They raise hope, they inflame courage, they provoke emulation, they urge on modesty, they awaken curiosity, they affect fancy, they set in motion all the springs of activity. It may not be amiss to show how particularly,

1. They raise hope, by discovering to us and assuredly proving the feasibleness of matters propounded, or the possibility of success in undertaking good designs, and that by the best and most convincing of arguments, experience. Nothing so depresseth hope and advanceth despondency, as an apprehension of impossibility, or which is equivalent thereto, an extreme difficulty (appearing to surmount our present forces) in the business to be attempted: of such a conceit desperation seemeth a reasonable consequence. For, *τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἐφίεσθαι μανικὸν*, 'it is a madness to aim at impossibilities;' and such, considering the great infirmity of human nature, its strong propensions to evil, and averseness from good, together with the

manifold impediments and allurements objecting themselves in the way of good practice, all duties as barely represented in precepts, and pressed by rational inducements might seem to be, if good example did not clearly demonstrate them to be possible, yea sometimes facile; even those, which on a superficial view do seem most difficult, and insuperable by our weak endeavor. The Stoical doctrine, which described a fine and stately portraiture of virtue, and inculcated very strict rules, (a close following of God and nature, a perfect victory over self, the subduing all passions, and overruling all corporeal appetites; an intire freedom, composure, and tranquillity of mind; a total indifferency in respect of fortune and all external events, with the like duties, rarely practised, although, on all accounts, acknowleged conformable to reason,) was therefore by most rejected as useless, or exploded as ridiculous, as being presumed to propound matters purely imaginary and unpracticable: yet he that had seen this doctrine in great measure exemplified by Zeno, the first master of it, would have had no such reason to contemn it, nor to despair of practising according to it, if he would seriously endeavor it: exemplified, I say, by Zeno, whereof we have an illustrious testimony from a solemn decree of the Athenians: ἐπειδὴ Ζήνων Μνασέου, &c. Laert. in Zen. 'Whereas Zeno, the son of Mnaseas the Cittican, having many years professed philosophy in this city, and as well in all other things hath demeaned himself like a good man, as particularly exhorting the young men, who went to be instructed by him, hath provoked them to virtue and sobriety; withal exhibiting his own life a pattern of the best things answerable to the discourses he used to make; it is therefore auspiciously decreed by the people, that Zeno the son of Mnaseas be solemnly praised and crowned (according to the usage) with a golden crown; and that a monument be erected for him at the public charge in the Ceramicum,' (the place where those were interred who had bravely exposed their lives for public defence.) This was indeed a noble attestation and a comely respect exhibited to a virtuous conversation; making in some measure a satisfaction for the heinous affront done thereto, when, instead of honoring it with a crown, they rewarded it with a cup of poison, given to the excellent

Socrates. Suitably to which testimony Seneca saith of Cleanthes, that his virtuous practice depended more on the observation of Zeno's life, than the information of his doctrine. *Zenonem Cleanthes non expressisset, si eum tantummodo audisset: vitæ ejus interfuit, secreta perspexit, observavit illum an ex formula sua viveret.* 'Cleanthes,' saith he, 'had not so nearly resembled Zeno, if he had only attended to his discourses: he was present to his life, he took notice of his private carriage, he observed whether his practice did suit to his doctrine.' So that Stoicism itself, which speaketh such prodigies, was, it seems, founded not only on big words, the issues of a speculative fancy, but more on the good practice of its first master and institutor. And indeed he that would effectually persuade the undertaking of any enterprise, must either suppose it, or prove it effectible; and the most easy, the most evident way of proving it is by example. 'Men,' saith Pliny junior well, 'are better instructed by examples, which have in them chiefly this advantage, that they do prove the things may be done which they enjoin.' And, 'human infirmity,' saith Salvian to the same purpose, 'requires the assistance of example, that it may more easily now perform that which it knows others to have before done; all posterity being admonished by hearing that what hath once been done may be done again.' And, 'the example,' saith St. Bernard, 'of a work done is a lively and efficacious oration, easily persuading what we intend, by proving that feasible which we strive to persuade unto.' On which score we therefore are exceedingly obliged to those holy men, who by their practice have assured us that the highest duties exacted of us by our religion (the mortification of unreasonable desires, the suppression of irregular passions, the loving and blessing our enemies, the renouncing worldly vanities and pleasures, the rejoicing in afflictions, the voluntary abdication of our estates in some cases, yea, exposing life itself to inevitable hazard and loss,) are not chimerical propositions of impossible performances; but duties (if we shall seriously and vigorously apply our endeavors to them, and suffer our hopes to be elevated by their example) really practicable. Piety abstractedly viewed in precept may seem an airy project, a name, a notion; but it being seen in example will prove a

matter substantial, true, and feasible. A direct and pure speculation thereof may dazzle our sight, and dash our hopes; but as being reflected from persons practising it, we may bear its lustre, and hope to attain it.

2. Examples do inflame courage. So the Apostle to the Hebrews signifieth, when to this purpose he intimateth that he mentioned and setteth before them the examples of the patriarchs; that he thereby might excite their courage, and cause them resolutely to undertake that obedience, and patiently to undergo those afflictions, which they performed and sustained; 'that,' saith he, 'ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' For that heat and active spirit, which in some degree resideth in all men's breasts, is by example kindled, as one flame is kindled by the contact or approach of another. How many persons, timorous and averse from dangerous undertakings, have notwithstanding become very bold and adventurous in war, by the discipline and influence of an exemplary valor! It is Plutarch's observation concerning Cæsar's soldiers, that they who in service under other commanders did not exceed the ordinary rate of courage, nor excel their fellows, did yet when he led them become irresistibly valiant, being animated and inspired by his unparalleled gallantry: and who is there indeed so incurably heartless, so desperately sluggish or stupid, whom the sight of a valiant leader marching before into the mouth of danger, will not infuse fire and vigor into, and instigate forward into a participation of brave adventure? So example doth by a kind of contagion insinuate courage, or inveigle men thereinto; beside that it is a kind of daring, and proclaimeth him a dastard, that will not imitate it; which imputation the lowest courage of man can hardly digest, and will therefore, by doing somewhat answerable, strive to decline it.

3. Again: Examples provoke emulation; which is another strong principle of activity; moving us earnestly to desire, and thence eagerly to pursue, whatever good, privilege, or advantage, we see another to enjoy. To observe another of the same nature and capacities with ourselves to have shone with an illustrious virtue, to be consecrated to posterity by a lasting fame, and to be crowned with glorious rewards above; what

other reflexions of thought can it produce in us, than such as these? Shall he, a man like myself, endued with the same faculties, appetites, and passions; subject to the same infirmities, temptations, needs, cares, and incumbrances of life; shall he, by noble dispositions of soul, and worthy performances, render himself highly considerable; while I, by sordid qualities and unworthy practices, debase and render myself despicable? Shall he leave behind him monuments of eternal praise, while I do nothing worthy of regard or memory? Shall he enjoy the favor of the great God, and the comforts of a blessed eternity, but I be wholly deprived of that joyful estate, and plunged into endless sorrows and desperate misery? Shall a Joseph stoutly resist and overcome the strongest temptations, and I be easily baffled by the least solicitation of vice? Shall a stripling David gloriously triumph over giants, while I basely am vanquished by dwarfs? Shall Job be stripped of all his goods with contentedness, and endure the most grievous pains with patience, while I am discomposed for any small loss, and dismayed by the least cross accident? Shall Abraham here, by his faith and obedience, attain to be called the friend of God, and rest for ever in his glorious and happy bosom, while I deservedly am refused the honor and comfort of that heavenly communion here, and shall hereafter be cast out from that blissful presence, into the dismal mansions of wretched folly and wickedness? Did Paul, once a stubborn Jew, a blind pharisee, a grievous blasphemer, a bloody persecutor, by a seasonable conversion repair his state, approve himself to God by an eminent zeal for his glory, undergo restless pains, run desperate hazards, and endure all sorts of distresses for the propagation of God's heavenly truth, obtaining thence a never-fading crown of glory in heaven, and a perpetual renown on earth; and shall I then, who from my youth have been educated in the most true and holy religion, who have by solemn engagements devoted myself thereto, who may without any trouble or danger profess and practice according to that holy discipline, proceed in wicked courses, provoking God's wrath, and attracting his vengeance on me? No: since the capacities are alike, since the means are common, since the rewards of piety are promiscuously exposed and offered unto all, why should I, by

deplorable perverseness or negligence, suffer myself to be deprived of it and its benefits? Why shall not I become as good, as commendable, as happy as any other man? These are the conceits and voices of natural emulation, that mighty passion (so often and by many effects it discovereth itself to be) implanted in our original constitution to be as a spur and incentive, stimulating and inflaming us unto the ready undertaking and vigorous pursuit of good purposes; the which perhaps hath produced more noble effects than any other passion or inclination of our souls: for all manner of excellency in knowlege, in prowess, in virtue, how often doth it issue from this source! Doth not the admired fame of men notable for learning, (recorded in story, or subject to present observation,) and a jealousy of being surpassed in accomplishments competent to human nature, sharpen the appetite, and rouse the industry of most scholars, whom neither the love of knowlege nor its apparent usefulness could anywise persuade to bear so much toil in acquist thereof? Do not all histories acquaint us that the most gallant enterprises and exploits of famous warriors have derived their beginning from an emulation of the glory purchased by their ancestors? (wisdom and valor have thus especially been propagated; one man's signal excellency being parent to the like in many others.) And that this passion may in like manner be subservient to the production of virtue and piety, is plain enough from parity of reason, and from experience; and we have (for farther argument thereof) the apostle's practice using it to this purpose: St. Paul employed it as an engine for the conversion of his dear countrymen; whom, by raising in them a jealousy of being outstripped, in God's favor, and its effects, by the Gentiles, he endeavoreth to provoke to the embracing of the Christian faith: 'I speak to you Gentiles,' saith he, 'inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify my office, *εἴ πως παραζηλώσω μου τὴν σάρκα*, if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.' And St. James instigateth us unto fervency of prayer, by minding us that 'Elias was a man of like passions with ourselves;' yet was able by his prayers to shut and open heaven, to procure barrenness and fertility to the earth. And the Apostle to the

Hebrews chargeth us to consider one another, εἰς παροξυσμὸν ἀγάπης, καὶ καλῶν ἔργων, so as to provoke one another (or by mutual emulation to sharpen one another) to charity and good works.

4. Examples do work on modesty, that preserver and guardian of virtue, as Cicero calls it.* For every good action of another doth upbraid, reproach, and shame him, who acteth not conformably thereto. Can we without a trembling heart, and blushing forehead, view the practices of the ancient saints, if ours be altogether unlike them? If they, to please God and secure their salvation, did undergo such prodigious pains in assiduous devotions, abstinences, watchings, and we contrariwise are extremely sluggish, cold, and negligent in the performance of our ordinary duties; if they willingly renounced all sensual complacencies, and we either cherish ourselves in a soft delicacy of life, or wallow in a profane dissolution of manners; if they, to free themselves from distracting cares, voluntarily disburdened themselves of all needless incumbrances, and we are wholly busy in heaping up wealth, and driving on worldly interests; if they gladly embraced and endured the sharpest afflictions, and we are terrified by the thought, are overwhelmed by the sense of the least disappointment, or distasteful occurrence; how can we without extreme regret of mind, and confusion of face, consider their practice, or compare it with ours? It is a profligate impudence of him that can daily hear and read the stories of their doings, without being deeply sensible, and ashamed at the dissonance appearing between their course of life and his.

5. Example awakens that curiosity which is natural to us, and of no mean efficacy on our actions. For whatever we see done, we are apt to be inquisitive concerning it; why and to what purpose it is done, what the grounds are, and what the fruits of the performance; especially if the matter seem considerably important, and the action proceedeth from a person deserving respect; whereof having passed some competent judgment, we are by the same instinct of curiosity farther trans-

* Custos omnium virtutum, dedecus fugiens, laudemque maxime consequens verecundia est.—Cic. Part. Rhet.

ported into a desire of discerning by our trial and experience whether the event correspondeth to our expectation; so are we easily induced to imitate the actions of others. By which means as vice ordinarily is conceived and propagated, (men by a preposterous and perverse curiosity being inveigled to try what they see others affect or enjoy,) so may virtue also by the same means be engendered and nourished; the general ways of producing and maintaining those contrary habits being alike. As therefore it is a great blemish and reproach to human nature, that,

——— Faciles imitandis
Turpibus et pravis omnes sumus——

we, as the satirist truly observeth of us, 'have a great proclivity to follow naughty examples;' so there is from hence some amends, that we have also some inclination to imitate good and worthy precedents; the which is somewhat more strong and vigorous, because countenanced and encouraged by the approbation of reason, our most noble faculty.

6. Examples also do please the mind and fancy in contemplation of them, thence drawing a considerable influence on practice. No kind of studious entertainment doth so generally delight as history, or the tradition of remarkable examples: even those who have an abhorrency or indisposition toward other studies, (who have no genius to apprehend the more intricate subtleties of science, nor the patience to pursue rational consequences,) are yet often much taken with historical narrations; these striking them with a delectable variety of accidents, with circumstantial descriptions, and sensible representations of objects, do greatly affect and delight their fancies; especially the relation of notable adventures and rare accidents is wont to be attended with great pleasure and satisfaction. And such are those, which present to us the lives and examples of holy men, abounding with wonders of providence and grace: no attempts so gallant, no exploits so illustrious, as those which have been achieved by the faith and patience, by the prudence and courage of the ancient saints; they do far surpass the most famous achievements of Pagan heroes. It was, I dare say, more wonderful that Abraham with his retinue of

household servants should vanquish four potent and victorious kings; and that Gideon with three hundred unarmed men should discomfit a vastly numerous host, than that Alexander with a well-appointed army of stout and expert soldiers should overturn the Persian empire. The siege of Jericho is so far more remarkable than those most famous ones of Numantia and Saguntus, as it is more strange that the blast of trumpets and the noise of people shouting should demolish walls, than the shaking them with rams, or discharging massy stones against them. And he that carefully will compare the deeds of Sampson and Hercules, shall find that one true exploit performed by the former doth much in force and strangeness surmount the twelve fabulous labors of the other: no triumphs indeed are comparable to those of piety; no trophies are so magnificent and durable, as those which victorious faith erecteth: that history therefore which reports the *res gestæ*, the acts and sufferings of most pious men, must in reason be esteemed not only the most useful, but also the most pleasant; yielding the sweetest entertainment to well-disposed minds; wherein we see virtue expressed, not in bare idea only, but in actual life, strength, motion; in all its beauty and ornaments: than which no spectacle can be more stately; no object more grateful can be presented to the discerning eye of reason.

7. We may farthermore consider that God hath provided and recommended to us one example, as a perfect standard of good practice; the example of our Lord: the which declareth the use and efficacy of good example, as one principal instrument of piety. That indeed is the most universal, absolute, and assured pattern; yet doth it not supersede the use of other examples: not only the valor and conduct of the general, but those of inferior officers, yea, the resolution of common soldiers, do serve to animate their fellows. The stars have their season to guide us, as well as the sun; especially when our eyes are so weak, as hardly to bear the day. Even, considering our infirmity, inferior examples by their imperfection sometime have a peculiar advantage. Our Lord's most imitable practice did proceed from an immense virtue of divine grace, which we cannot arrive to; it in itself is so perfect and high, that we may not ever reach it; looking on it may therefore sometimes dazzle

and discourage our weakness: but other good men had assistances in measure, such as we may hope to approach unto; they were subject to the difficulties which we feel; they were exposed to the perils of falling, which we fear: we may therefore hope to march on in a reasonable distance after them; we may, by help of the same grace, come near in transcribing their less exact copy.

To conclude: Since on so many accounts we are obliged to follow good examples; since they are of so great use toward our proceeding in the way to happiness; thence they conduce to the clear instruction of our understanding, to the forcibly inclining our reason, to the vehement excitement of our passions, to the delightfully affecting our imagination in subserviency to good practice; let us make that due and profitable use of them, which we should and may do. Let us, with diligent attention perusing the sacred history, meditate on the lives of holy men therein propounded as patterns of a persevering faith in God, and conscionable obedience to his commandments. Let the light of their exemplary practice in all kind of piety and virtue continually shine on our souls, to direct our minds, to inflame our affections, to quicken our resolutions, to detect the errors and correct the faults of our lives, that we, imitating their virtuous and pious conversation, may partake of those comfortable rewards, of that joy and bliss whereof they rest possessed. The which God Almighty, and our blessed Saviour, the author and finisher of our faith, by his gracious aid and blessing grant unto us; to whom be all glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXXV.

I JOHN, CHAP. II.—VERSE 6.

MEANING of the expressions *to abide in Christ, to put on Christ*, &c., explained, as not denoting any physical inherence, or essential conjunction with Christ, but only a mutual relation arising from our profession as his disciples, &c.: so that it is the duty of every one professing Christianity, to conform his life to the pattern of Christ's life, and to follow his example.

I. For illustration and confirmation of which point, it may be observed that the holy Apostles do on all occasions assume this supposition, when they would persuade their followers to the practice of any virtue, or performance of any duty. Instances of this quoted. And their authority may be backed and enforced by several reasons.

II. The doing so hath a reasonableness and decency grounded on our relations to Christ. It is fit and comely that the manners of the disciple should be regulated by those of his master.

III. The following Christ's example is requisite to demonstrate the sincerity of our faith, love, and reverence to him. It is the most natural way of testifying affection, to imitate the manners of those who are the objects of it.

IV. By pretending to be Christians, we acknowlege the transcendent goodness, worth, and excellency of our Saviour. All who would require exquisite skill in any art or faculty, think it best to imitate the best masters therein: in like manner reason requires, if we would live well and happily, that we should conform our practice to that most perfect mirror of all virtue.

V. The practice of our Saviour thoroughly agrees with his

doctrine and law: he requires nothing of us which he did not eminently perform himself. He *fulfilled* in deed, as he taught in word, *all righteousness*.

VI. It being the design of divine goodness, in sending our Saviour, to render us good and happy, to deliver us from sin and misery, and thereby qualify us for eternal happiness, there could not be devised any more powerful means, or more convenient method for this purpose, than the propounding such an example, and obliging us to comply therewith: the which may appear, by considering, 1. the general efficacy of good example; 2. the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's; 3. the particular instances of his imitable goodness.

1. Good example is naturally an effectual instrument of good practice; for it most compendiously, pleasantly, and easily instructs; representing things to be done at one view; recommending them to us by the most plain and plausible reasoning; rousing men's courage, as one flame kindles another, &c. But,

2. More especially the example of Christ doth, in efficacy and influence, surpass all others.

First, in that it is a sure and infallible rule, an intire and perfect one of practice, swerving in no circumstance from truth and right; which privileges belong to no other example. The practice of the best men is not always to be imitated, nor ever absolutely, as a certain ground of action: reasons for this drawn from the imperfections of human nature, &c. But with regard to our blessed Saviour's example, the case is quite different: reasons for this drawn from his human nature so intimately connected with the divine, and from the unrestrained effusion of the Holy Spirit on him, to preserve him from all defilement by converse with the world, &c.

Secondly, the peculiar excellency of our Lord's example appears, in that he was, by divine Providence, to this very purpose sent into the world, as well by his practice as by his doctrine, to be the guide and master of holy life and obedience

to all men. So he declares himself as to some considerable passages of his life; and thence, by reasonable inference, we may suppose the same of the rest, so far as they might be conducible to the same end; especially, since of some acts no other, or no so probable an account can be given, as that they were done for example sake: this subject enlarged on.

Thirdly, our Saviour's example is especially influential, in that it was, by an admirable temperament, more accommodated for imitation than any others have been; that the perfect copy of his most holy life seems more easy to be transcribed, than the ruder draughts of holy men: this subject dilated on. So suited and tempered by divine wisdom was his life, that all sorts of men might be in an equal capacity to follow him; all might be enamoured with the homely majesty and plain beauty thereof.

Fourthly, the transcendent excellency of our Lord's example appears, in that it is attended with the greatest obligations of gratitude, justice, interest, and duty, engaging us to follow it: it is that of our best friend, who for our sakes voluntarily sustained most bitter pains, and sacrificed his life to redeem us from the extreme of misery. Here are inducements for us to love him, who so loved us; and *what a man loves, that he imitates, as much as lies in his power.*

These considerations may suffice to show the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example in virtue, and efficacy on our practice: the same might more abundantly be deduced from a survey of the most considerable particulars, in which we may and ought to imitate him: but time will not permit it. Concluding exhortations.

SERMON XXXV.

ABIDING IN CHRIST TO BE DEMONSTRATED BY WALKING AS CHRIST DID.

I JOHN, CHAP. II.—VERSE 6.

He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk as he walked.

To abide in Christ, to be in Christ, to put on Christ; and reciprocally Christ's being in us, living, dwelling, being formed in us; and the like expressions occurring in holy Scripture, do not denote any physical inherence, or essential conjunction between Christ and us, (such as those who affect unintelligible mysteries, rather than plain sense, would conceit,) but only that mutual relation accruing from our profession of being Christ's disciples, our being inserted into his body the church, being governed by his laws, partaking of his grace, with all the privileges of the gospel, relying on his promises, and hoping for eternal salvation from him. By virtue of which relation, we may be said, in a mystical or moral manner, to be united to him, deriving strength and sustenance from him, as the members from the head, the branches from the tree, the other parts of the building from the foundation; by which similitudes this mysterious union is usually expressed in Scripture: in effect, briefly, to be in, or to abide in Christ, implieth no more, but our being truly in faith and practice Christians; so that the meaning of St. John's words seemeth plainly and simply to be this: Whoever pretends to be a Christian, (that is, to believe the doctrine and embrace the discipline of Christ,) ought

to walk (that is, is obliged to order the whole course of his life and actions) as Christ walked, (that is, as Christ did live and converse in the world:) or, it is the duty of every one professing Christianity to conform his life to the pattern of Christ's life, to follow his example, to imitate his practice. This is the importance of the words, this the subject of our present discourse.

I. For illustration and confirmation of which point, we may observe that the holy apostles do on all occasions assume this supposition, when they would persuade their disciples to the practice of any virtue, or performance of any duty; enforcing their exhortations, by representing the practice of Christ as an unquestionable ground of obligation, and an effectual inducement thereto. Hence they incite them to holiness: 'But,' saith St. Peter, 'as he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation:' to charity; 'And walk in love,' saith St. Paul, 'as Christ also loved us:' to patience; 'Because,' saith St. Peter, 'Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.' And, 'Let us,' saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, 'run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross: to humility: 'Let,' saith St. Paul, 'the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation:' to charitable compliance, and inoffensive demeanor toward others, intimated by St. Paul, when he says, 'Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved:' 'Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ:' and again, 'Let every one please his neighbor for his good to edification; for even Christ pleased not himself.' Thus do the apostles take all occasion, from the like practice of Christ, to persuade the performance of duty; and the strength of their argument lieth on the evidence of this supposition, that all professing themselves Christians are especially obliged to imitate Christ's example. And their authority may be backed and enforced by several reasons.

II. Doing so hath a reasonableness and decency grounded on

our relations to Christ: it is fit and comely that the manners of the disciple should be regulated by those of his master; that the servant should not, in his garb and demeanor, dissent or vary from his lord; that the subject should conform his humor to the fashion of his prince; especially that we should thus comply and conform to such a Master, such a Lord, such a Prince, whom (on highest considerations) by a most voluntary choice, and in a most solemn manner, we have absolutely devoted ourselves unto; this reason our Lord doth himself urge: 'Ye,' saith he to his disciples, 'call me Master, and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am: if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.'

III. Following Christ's example is requisite to demonstrate the sincerity of our faith, love, and reverence to him. It is the most natural way of testifying affection and respect, to imitate the manners of those persons, who are the objects of those acts and dispositions, to esteem what they approve, to delight in what they affect, and consequently (since actions do proceed from affections) to do as they do. Contrary actions are plain arguments of contrary judgments, inclinations, and affections. Who can imagine we sincerely believe in Christ, or heartily love him, or truly honor him, that seeth us to loathe what he liked, or affect what he detested; to contemn what he prized, or value what he despised; to neglect what he pursued, or embrace what he avoided? But if our lives resemble his, any man will thence collect our respect and affection to him: this argument our Saviour doth also intimate: 'By this,' saith he, 'shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another:' that is, it will be an evident sign and strong argument, that ye really do believe in, love, and honor me, if ye imitate me in my charity.

IV. By pretending to be Christians we acknowlege the transcendent goodness, worth, and excellency of our Saviour; that he was incomparably better and wiser than any person ever was, or could be; that he always acted with the highest reason, out of the most excellent disposition of mind, in order to the best purposes; and that his practice therefore reasonably should be the rule and pattern of ours. For the best and

exactest in every kind is the measure of the rest. All that would obtain exquisite skill in any art or faculty, think best to imitate the works of the best masters therein: a painter, to draw after the pieces of Zeuxis or Apelles, of Raphael or Titian; an orator, to speak in the style of Cicero or Demosthenes; a soldier, to emulate the military achievements of Hannibal or Cæsar: in like manner, reason requireth, if we would live well and happily, that we should endeavor to conform our practice to that of our Saviour, the most perfect mirror of all virtue and goodness.

V. The practice of our Saviour did throughly agree with his doctrine and law; he required nothing of us, which he did not eminently perform himself. He fulfilled in deed, as well as taught in word, all righteousness. He was not *ignava opera, philosopha sententia;* like those masters of philosophy, so frequently taxed and derided by the satirists; who, by a horrid garb, supercilious looks, and loud declamations, would seem to discountenance those vices which themselves practised; nor like those hypocritical lawyers in the gospel, who laded other men with heavy burdens, such as themselves would not touch with one of their fingers: no, he imposed nothing on us, which he did not first bear on his own shoulders: the strictness of his life did, in all respects, correspond with the severity of his precepts, or rather did indeed much exceed them. They therefore who pretend to believe his doctrine, and avow themselves bound to observe his law, are consequently engaged to follow his practice, in which his doctrine and law are signally exemplified.

VI. It being the design of divine goodness, in sending our Saviour, to render us good and happy, to deliver us from sin and misery, to instruct us in the knowlege and excite us to the practice of all virtue, and thereby to qualify us for the enjoyment of a blessed immortality; effecting all this in a way agreeable to our natural condition and capacity; there could not be devised any more powerful means, or more convenient method, of accomplishing those excellent purposes, than by propounding such an example, and obliging us to comply therewith: the which may appear, 1. by considering in general the advantage and efficacy that good example is apt to have

on practice; 2. by weighing the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example above all others, in order to those ends; and 3. by surveying the particular instances of imitable goodness represented in the life of our Saviour.

1. Good example is naturally an effectual instrument of good practice; for that it doth most compendiously, pleasantly, and easily instruct; representing things to be done at one view, in a full body, clothed with all their modes and circumstances; it recommends them to us by the most plain and plausible way of reasoning, (and withal the most sure and safe,) the authority of wise and good men; it encourageth by evidently declaring the practicableness of rules prescribed; it kindleth and rouseth men's courage, by a kind of contagion, as one flame doth kindle another; it raiseth a worthy emulation of doing laudable things, which we see done; or of obtaining a share in the commendations and rewards of virtue. It urgeth modesty, breeding shame and regret in them who act contrarily thereto; it awakeneth curiosity, thereby producing a desire to make trial of what it proposeth; it affecteth and pleaseth the fancy, thereby insinuating an approbation, admiration, and liking of the good things which it representeth: briefly, it exciteth and engageth all our passions, setting on work all those powerful springs of activity; it consequently is, in its own nature, an efficacious mean of good practice. This we may in general say of all good example; but,

2. More especially the example of Christ doth, in efficacy and influence on good practice, surpass all others; on several accounts.

First, in that it is a sure and infallible rule, an intire and perfect rule of practice; deficient in no part, swerving in no circumstance from truth and right, which privileges are competent to no other example. The practice of the best men is not always to be imitated, nor ever absolutely as a certain ground of action; it is to be (so far as we have ability) considered, examined, and compared to more certain rules, (the divine laws and the principles of right reason,) according to their agreement with which they are to be followed: they are indeed (before trial of the case) probable arguments of what is done by them being good and lawful; they do outweigh slender

and obscure reasonings about the goodness of things; they may, when opportunity, leisure, or ability of farther inquiry and judgment about things are wanting, serve to direct us; but they are not throughly sure rules, or perfect measures of our duty. We should beware lest we be seduced even by holy persons; and, therefore, with circumspection and caution should peruse their story, and contemplate their demeanor; whereof those which are explicitly commended, or allowed by the divine judgment, we may, being assured that we are in the same circumstances, safely follow, (taking them for monitories, encouragements, and excitements to our duty:) but those that are directly condemned by the same sentence, or apparently devious from God's law, we as carefully should avoid; such as are of a doubtful and unaccountable nature we are to suspend about, and not to ground on; nor to argue from the fact to the rightfulness of them; the safest way being always (as we are able) to have recourse to the simple, plain, and perspicuous precepts of God, and dictates of reason. For the best men have been always subject to errors and infirmities; the fountain of original corruption in them was never so dried up, or closely stopped, but that some impure streams have bubbled forth; the fire of natural concupiscence was never so utterly quenched, but that sometimes it would blaze, or smoke out in bad actions; that intestine enemy, the flesh, was never throughly subdued, nor the body of sin quite slain and mortified in any other mortal man. Good men have ever had some foul spots, or deforming wrinkles, appearing in the beauteous face of their conversation; they have had their inequalities and indispositions of humor, their ebbs of devotion, their fits of sloth, their wanton freaks, their slips often, and sometimes their falls; they have been subject to be deluded by mistake, to be surprised by inadvertency, to be transported by passion, to be swayed by temper, to be biassed by interest, to be allured by temptation into false and unwarrantable proceedings; they might sometimes fail in the substance, oftener in the degree, in the manner, in the circumstances of action; we find them often complaining of their proneness to do amiss, bemoaning the wretched frailty of their state; yea, often repenting and bitterly mourning for their actual transgressions; there hardly is any saint recorded in

Scripture, without some blemish in his actions; which shows our weakness, and engageth us to be wary. They were, indeed, endowed with sufficient competences of divine light, and graces suitable to their private needs, or to the public exigences of their times, places, occasions, and affairs; but not with the perfection and extreme degrees thereof, requisite to preserve them from all miscarriage; so that we are not always, or in all cases, to conform our actions to their examples: we must not learn to equivocate of Abraham; nor to circumvent of Jacob; nor to be choleric of Moses, (so as in our excess of passion to break the tables of the divine law;) nor of Eli to be fondly affectionate or indulgent to our relations; nor of David to utter uncharitable imprecations; nor to dissemble of St. Peter; nor of St. Paul to revile magistrates. The use we are to make of many practices of most eminently pious men, is not to be misguided by them into wrong paths; not by them to authorise or excuse our presumptuous misdeeds; but to make us to admire and to rely on the divine mercy, which so graciously did overlook and pardon their offences; to provoke us to an imitation of their repentance; to render us watchful in shunning those rocks, on which persons so skilful in the conduct of their lives have dashed; to engage us to humility, by considering so manifest arguments of our frailty, and our being obnoxious to greater and more frequent miscarriages.

But as to our Saviour's example, the case is quite different; for though he did miracles as God, he commanded as Christ; he did many heroical things in discharge of his office, &c in which things we cannot or may not imitate him: yet, whatever in his life was in its own nature imitable by us, which did not exceed our natural powers, nor disagree with our condition and quality: whatever he as man, in a private capacity, as subject to the divine law, with regard thereto, performed, we may, with all freedom, confidence, and security, imitate. Nor can so doing incur any danger of error or guilt; for we cannot, without great folly and impiety, suspect any fault or imperfection in his most pure, righteous, and innocent life: he was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners;' he was 'a lamb without blemish and without spot;' he was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.' 'He did no sin,

nor was any guile found in his mouth.' 'God gave him of his spirit not by measure.' These are the voices and elogies of the sacred oracles concerning him. The heavenly extraction even of his humanity derived no original contagion from our polluted stock, and rendered him free from the common incentives of evil concupiscence. The inseparable presence of the divinity with him ('for God was with him,' as St. Peter expressed it,) and the unrestrained effusion of the holy spirit on him, did preserve him from all defilements of infectious conversation in this world; a clear evidence of divine light always shining in his soul, directed him infallibly in the paths of truth and righteousness: no tempest of cross accidents without, nor any estuations of internal passion, could discompose the steady calm and serenity of his mind; no allurement of worldly pleasure, nor temptation of profit, could pervert his practice, or seduce his heart; being inflamed with most intense love of God, and intire charity to men: so that his example must needs be a perfect rule and sure direction to us. Which consideration cannot but yield great encouragement and comfort in following him; freeing us from all anxious doubt and suspicion of mistake in our spiritual progress; like the presence of a sure guide to the bewildered traveller; like the appearance of a star to the weather-beaten mariner; like that miraculous pillar of fire, which safely conducted the wandering Israelites through the unknown and unfrequented passages of a wild desert. But farther,

Secondly, the peculiar excellency of our Lord's example appears, in that he was, by the divine providence, to this very purpose designed and sent into the world, as well by his practice as by his doctrine, to be the guide and master of holy life and obedience to all men; and did accordingly propound to himself this end of his actions, that he might be imitated by his disciples. So he declareth himself as to some considerable passages of his life; and thence, by reasonable inference, we may suppose the same of the rest, so far as they might be conducible to the same end; especially, since of some performances, no other, or no so probable account can be given, as that they were done for exemplarity: for why should he fast, who had no sins to be repented of, no re-

bellious flesh to be tamed, no intemperate desires to be mortified, no coldness of devotion to be enlivened thereby? And why did he offer himself to be baptised, who had no original stain to be cleansed of, no fault to be forgiven, no want of special grace to be conferred? Why, but, by his exemplary fulfilling all righteousness, to teach us ready obedience to all divine institutions, and peaceable compliance with all laudable customs? So an ancient writer wisely descanteth on those practices of our Saviour: 'He was,' saith that writer, 'baptised, and fasted, not because he had need of any cleansing, or fasting, who in nature was pure and holy; but that he might attest to the truth of St. John, and might exhibit a pattern to us.'* What induced him to condescend to such a misbeseeming employment to appearance, as the washing of his disciples' feet, he doth himself tell us: 'if I then,' saith he, 'your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you.' This was his professed scope and drift, in that admirable deportment of his, to teach us humility, charity, and condescension toward the meanest of our brethren. What did those exuberant instances of charity, practised by him, import? This especially, that we should imitate them: hither he drives them; 'this,' saith he, 'is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.' Why was he in his disposition so meek and gentle, in his conversation so humble and lowly? To this purpose, that we might of him learn those excellent qualities: 'learn of me,' saith he, 'for I am meek and lowly in heart.' And St. Peter saith, 'that Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps;' signifying that he designed his patience to be exemplary to us. If then our Saviour, in his humility, his charity, his meekness, his patience, intended his life to be exemplary, and expressly propounded it as such; then certainly, in his devotion, his self-denial, his justice, in all other virtues, he had the same intention; and what he intended, God designed to be; and what God

* Ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ἐνήστευσεν οὐκ αὐτὸς ἀπορυπόσεως, ἢ νηστείας χρείαν ἔχων, ἢ καθάρσεως, ὁ τῇ φύσει καθαρὸς καὶ ἅγιος, ἀλλ' ἵνα Ἰωάννῃ ἀληθείαν προσμαρτυρήσῃ, καὶ ἡμῖν ὑπογραμμὸν παράσχηται.

designed to be, was doubtless eminently conducible to the end designed; and therefore our Saviour's life was most exemplary. Other saints indeed were of very exemplary conversation; but either proved to be so according to ordinary course of providence, without any peculiar designation thereto, (their free choice conspiring with God's grace in producing good works shining before men,) or at most by a restrained determination to some particular time, place, or people; as Moses was chosen and appointed to conduct the Israelites; 'David was taken from the sheepfold, and following the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob God's people, and Israel his inheritance;' Jeremy was sanctified from his birth, and ordained to be a prophet of the nations in his times; and St. Paul was separated from the womb to be a preacher of the Christian faith: these, and such like eminent persons, Almighty God, in his goodness, was pleased to raise up, to be, in their generations, as it were, partial and temporary saviours, as by declaring his will, and revealing his truth to men, so by guiding them with a remarkable example: these 'burning and shining lamps' (as St John the Baptist is called) were indeed like lamps set up in some particular families, with a competent lustre, to dispel the present darkness, shining within their definite sphere, and for a determinate time: but our Saviour, like the sun, fixed in a higher orb, was ordained with a perpetual and unconfined splendor to illuminate the universe, to cause a general and everlasting day of healthful and comfortable knowlege over the face of the whole earth. He was 'that true light which enlighteneth every man coming into the world;' 'He was prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the nations;' (not Israel only, but the nations indefinitely, or all nations.) He was ordained, not commander of a single regiment, or party, but captain-general of all mankind, to conduct all those who were disposed to follow him, by a victorious obedience, into that triumphant estate of everlasting joy and happiness. His example doth belong unto us all, without exception, by divine ordination; for we, all of us, were (to use St. Paul's expression) 'predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son; that he might be the first-born among many brethren.' So it was, and so it became the infinite goodness and philanthropy of God, to

bestow on mankind one perfectly good example, inviting to all virtue, and so fit to countervail all those many bad ones, wherewith we converse, enticing to vice; to set forth, among so many imperfect ones, one accomplished piece of his heavenly workmanship, able to attract the eyes and ravish the hearts of all men with admiration of its excellent worth and beauty; to offer to our view some discernible representation of his invisible perfections; that so we might better be induced and inured to apprehend, love, reverence, and imitate himself by contemplation of that most exquisite image of him; to give an evident proof that the highest virtue is not unpracticable, that human nature, by aid and guidance of the divine spirit, may arrive to the sublimest pitch of perfection in goodness: in fine, to expose such a common, sweet, and lovely pattern, as we with assurance, joy, and comfort may follow.

Thirdly, our Saviour's example is especially influential on practice, in that it was, by an admirable temperament, more accommodated for imitation than any others have been; that the perfect copy of his most holy life seems more easy to be transcribed than the ruder draughts of other holy men: for though it were written with an incomparable fairness, delicacy, and evenness; not slurred with any foul blot, not any where declining from exact straightness; yet were the lineaments thereof exceedingly plain and simple; not by any gaudy flourishes, or impertinent intrigues, rendered difficult to studious imitation; so that even women and children, the weakest and meanest sort of people, as well as the most wise and ingenious, might easily perceive its design, and with good success write after it. His was a gentle and steady light, bright indeed, but not dazzling the eye; warm, but not scorching the face of the most intent beholder; no affected singularities, no supercilious morosities, no frivolous ostentations of seemingly high, but really fruitless performances; nothing that might deter a timorous, discourage a weak, or offend a scrupulous disciple, is observable in his practice: but, on the contrary, his conversation was full of lowliness and condescension, of meekness and sweetness, of openness and candid simplicity; apt to invite and allure all men to approach toward it, and with satisfaction to enjoy it. He did not seclude himself into the constant retirements of a cloister,

nor into the farther recesses of a wilderness, (as some others have done,) but conversed freely and indifferently with all sorts of men, even the most contemptible and odious sort of men, publicans and sinners; like the sun, with an impartial bounty, liberally imparting his pleasant light and comfortable warmth to all. He used no uncouth austerities in habit or diet; but complied, in his garb, with ordinary usage, and sustained his life with such food as casual opportunity did offer; so that his indifferency in that kind yielded matter of obloquy against him from the fond admirers of a humorous preciseness. His devotions (though exceedingly sprightful and fervent) were not usually extended to a tedious and exhausting durance, nor strained into ecstatical transports, charming the natural senses, and overpowering the reason; but calm, steady, and regular, such as persons of honest intention and hearty desire (though not endued with high fancy or stirring passion) might readily imitate. His zeal was not violent or impetuous, except on very great reason, and extraordinary occasion, when the honor of God or good of men was much concerned. He was not rigorous in the observance of traditional rites and customs, (such as were needlessly burdensome, or which contained in them more of formal show than of real fruit,) yet behaved himself orderly and peaceably, giving due respect to the least institution of God, and complying with the innocent customs of men; thereby pointing out to us the middle way between peevish superstition and boisterous faction; which as always the most honest, so commonly is the most safe and pleasant way to walk in. He delighted not to discourse of sublime mysteries, (although his deep wisdom comprehended all,) nor of subtile speculations and intricate questions, such as might amuse and perplex rather than instruct and profit his auditors; but usually did feed his auditors with the most common and useful truths, and that in the most familiar and intelligible language; not disdaining the use of vulgar sayings and trivial proverbs, when they best served to insinuate his wholesome meaning into their minds. His whole life was spent in exercise of the most easy and pleasant, yet most necessary and substantial duties; obedience to God, charity, meekness, humility, patience, and the like; the which, that he might practise with the greatest latitude, and with most

advantage for general imitation, he did not addict himself to any particular way of life, but disentangled himself from all worldly care and business; choosing to appear in the most free, though very mean condition; that he might indifferently instruct, by his example, persons of all callings, degrees, and capacities; especially the most, that is, the poor; and might have opportunity, in the face of the world, to practise the most difficult of necessary duties; lowliness, contentedness, abstinence from pleasure, contempt of the world, sufferance of injuries and reproaches. Thus suited and tempered by divine wisdom was the life of our blessed Saviour, that all sorts of men might be in an equal capacity to follow him, that none might be offended, affrighted, or discouraged; but that all might be pleased, delighted, enamored, with the homely majesty and plain beauty thereof. And in effect so it happened, that ordinary people (the weakest, but sincerest and unprejudiced sort of men) were greatly taken with, most admired and applauded his deportment; many of them readily embracing his doctrine, and devoting themselves to his discipline; while only the proud, envious, covetous, and ambitious scribes and lawyers rejected his excellent doctrine, scorned the heavenly simplicity and holy integrity of his life.

Fourthly, the transcendent excellency of our Lord's example appeareth, in that it is attended with the greatest obligations, (of gratitude and ingenuity, of justice, of interest, of duty;) mightily engaging us to follow it. For it is not the example of an ordinary or inconsiderable person, of a stranger, of one indifferent or unrelated to us; but of a glorious prince, of heavenly extraction, (the first-born Son of the Almighty God, sole heir of eternal Majesty,) of our Lord and Master, to whom we are for ever bound by indispensable bands of duty and obedience; of our great Captain, who hath undertaken to subdue our enemies, and hath obliged us to follow his conduct, in a holy warfare, against them, by most solemn sacraments and vows; of our best Friend, from whom we have received the greatest favors and benefits imaginable; of our most gracious Saviour, who, for our sake, hath voluntarily sustained most bitter pains and shameful contumelies; having sacrificed his dearest heart-blood to redeem us from intolerable slaveries, and from extremities of

horrible misery; of him, to whom, in all respects, we do owe the highest respect, love, and observance that can be. Now it is the nature and property both of respect and love (such as on so many grounds we owe to him) to beget, in the person respecting and loving, an endeavor, answerable to the degrees of those dispositions, of conforming to and resembling the qualities and manners of the person respected or beloved. We see how readily children do comply with the customs of their parents and tutors; servants of their masters and patrons; subjects of their princes and governors, with a studious earnestness composing themselves to express in their carriage, not only their good or their indifferent fashions and manners, but even their most palpable deformities and vices; insomuch that a whole family, a city, a nation may be debauched from its sobriety, or reformed from its dissoluteness, even instantly, by the example of one person, who, by his place, power, and authority, challengeth extraordinary reverence from men: and much greater influence hath hearty love to transform our manners into an agreement with the manners of him we love: 'What a man loves, that he imitateth so much as lies in his power,' saith Hierocles,* truly. For love being founded on a good esteem, and a benevolent inclination thence resulting, engageth the affectionate person to admire the qualities of him he affecteth, to observe his deportments, to make the most advantageous construction of what he doeth; to fancy he doeth all things with best reason and discretion; to deem, therefore, that all his actions deserve and require imitation: hence doth love either find, or soon produce, a competent similitude in the parties, (a similitude of mind, of will, of inclination, and affection, an *eadem velle et nolle*:) it doth forcibly attract as to a vicinity of place and converse, so to an agreement of affections and actions; it uniteth the most distant, it reconcileth the most opposite, it turneth the most discordant natures into a sweet consent and harmony of disposition and demeanor. We then having the greatest reason both to honor and love our Saviour, surely his example being duly studied and considered by us, must needs obtain a superlative influence on our practice, and be very powerful to conform and assimilate it to his.

* Ὁ γὰρ ἐγαπᾷ τις καὶ μιμεῖται ὅσον οἷόν τε.—Hier.

These considerations may suffice to show the peculiar excellency of our Saviour's example in virtue, and efficacy on our practice; the same more abundantly might be deduced from a survey of the most considerable particulars, in which we may and ought to imitate him. But the time will not suffer us to launch forth into so vast a sea of discourse. I shall only, therefore, from the premises, exhort, that if any earnest desire of happiness, any high esteem of virtue, any true affection to genuine sanctity do lodge in our breasts, we should apply this most excellent means of attaining them; the study and endeavor of imitating the life of our Lord. If we have in us any truth and sincerity, and do not vainly prevaricate in our profession of being Christ's disciples, and votaries of that most holy institution, let us manifest it by a real conformity to the practice of him who is our Master, and author of our faith. If we have in us any wisdom, or sober consideration of things, let us employ it in following the steps of that infallible guide, designed by heaven to lead us in the straight, even, and pleasant ways of righteousness, unto the possession of everlasting bliss. If we do verily like and approve the practice of Christ, and are affected with the innocent, sweet, and lovely comeliness thereof, let us declare such our mind by a sedulous care to resemble it. If we bear any honor and reverence, any love and affection to Christ; if we are at all sensible of our relations, our manifold obligations, our duties to our great Lord, our best Friend, our most gracious Redeemer; let us testify it by a zealous care to become like to him: let a lively image of his most righteous and innocent, most holy and pious, most pure and spotless life be ever present to our fancies; so as to inform our judgments, to excite our affections, to quicken our endeavors, to regulate our purposes, to correct our mistakes, to direct, amend, and sanctify our whole lives. Let us, with incessant diligence of study, meditate on the best of histories, wherein the tenor of his divine practice is represented to us; revolving frequently in our thoughts all the most considerable passages thereof, entertaining them with devout passions, impressing them on our memories, and striving to express them in our conversations: let us endeavor continually to walk in the steps of our Lord, and 'to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth;' which that

we may be able to do, do thou, O blessed Redeemer, draw us; draw us by the cords of thy love; draw us by the sense of thy goodness; draw us by the incomparable worth and excellency of thy person: draw us by the unspotted purity and beauty of thy example; draw us by the merit of thy precious death, and by the power of thy Holy Spirit; 'Draw us,' good Lord, 'and we shall run after thee.' Amen.

'Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an ensample of godly life; give us grace, that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit; and also daily endeavor ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.' Amen.

SUMMARY OF SERMON XXXVI.

LUKE, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 42.

THE great controversy between God and man is this; whose will shall take place, his or ours. The Almighty, by whose protection and mercy we subsist, claims the authority of regulating our practice, and disposing of our fortunes: but we affect to be our own masters, not willingly admitting any law which does not suit our fancy. To make good his right God applies all his forces, both of kindness and severity; yet commonly nothing avails, our will opposing itself with invincible obstinacy.

Herein as the chief worth, so the main difficulty of religious practice consists, in bending *that iron sinew;* in bringing our proud hearts to stoop, so as to resign our wills to the just, wise, and gracious will of God. We may accuse our nature, but in fact it is our pleasure; we may pretend weakness, but it is wilfulness, which is the chief cause of our guilty misdemeanors. Half the resolution with which we serve sin, would engage us in the service of virtue.

Wherefore in overcoming our will the stress lies: this is the fortress which holds out against omnipotence, and often, as it were, baffles it: since God does not choose to overpower our will, but only to win its consent and compliance by rational inducements: his victory would be no true victory over us, if gained by main force, or without the concurrence of our will. *We must take the yoke on us,* for God is served only by volunteers.

Our will indeed, of all things, is most our own; the only gift and proper sacrifice which we can offer, and therefore that which God chiefly desires, and most prizes. The free submission of it to the will of God is what our Lord came to teach us by his word and his example; especially in that great emergency which occasioned the words of the text.

For the more fully understanding this case, we must consider that our Lord, as partaker of our nature, *and in all things, sin only excepted, like unto us*, had a natural human will, so that what is innocently grateful to us, he relished with delight; whatever is distasteful to us, he resented with grief: hence his virtue shone more brightly, being *in all points tempted, and perfected through suffering*. Hence was the whole course of his life among men so designed as to be one continual exercise of thwarting that human will, and closing with the Divine pleasure. Of him indeed it was predicted, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God:* and as such a practice is little seen in achieving easy matters, it was ordered that he should encounter the severest trials.

Nature likes respect, and loathes contempt; therefore he was born of mean parentage, lived in a humble state, and was exposed to contumely. Nature affects the good opinion and good-will of men, especially in the way of gratitude; therefore the world's benefactor could say, *the world hateth me*, &c. Nature loves plentiful accommodations, and abhors want; therefore extreme penury was appointed to him. Nature delights in ease, quiet, and liberty; therefore did he spend his days in continual labor and travel, *having taken on him the form of a servant*. Nature covets good success to its designs and undertakings; therefore was he sent to instruct a dull, and reform a perverse generation, &c. In fine, natural will seeks pleasure, and shuns pain; but what pleasure did he taste? what appetite did he gratify? rather, what afflictions and torments did he not undergo?

Had his condition and fortune been otherwise framed, where had been the pious resignation of his will; where the precious merit of his obedience; where the glorious lustre of his example? How would he have shown so much charity, or laid such mighty obligations on us?

Such in general was the case: but there was something peculiar, and beyond all this occurring to him, which drew forth the words of the text. This explained and enlarged on: the intention of our Lord in these words not to be misrepresented, as implying any wish to shift off his passion, or any wavering in his resolution; but as uttered for our instruction, importing that what our human frailty was apt to suggest, his divine virtue was more ready to smother.

The contemplation of this example ought strongly to engage us; for if our blessed Lord had not his will, can we in reason expect, or in modesty desire, to have ours? Can we think much, for our trial and correction, to bear a little want, disgrace, or pain, when the Son of God was put to discharge the hardest tasks, to endure the sorest adversities?

But farther to enforce these duties, let us cast a glance on two considerations: 1. what the will is to which, 2. who the willer is to whom, we must submit.

1. What is the will of God? Is it any thing unjust, unworthy, dishonorable, injurious, or grievous? No, quite the contrary. Two things he willeth; that we should be good, and that we should be happy; the first in order to the second. *The will of God is our sanctification*, saith St. Paul. And what is this but the renewal and restoration of our fallen nature, fitting us for the converse of angels and for paradise. Again, God *willeth all men to be saved*. And what is this, but that we should obtain all the good we are capable of; that we should be filled with joy, and crowned with glory, &c.? This is God's will: and do we reject that which would save us, and adhere to a will that would ruin us?

Before we do this, let us consider, 2. whose will it is that requires our compliance.

It is the will of him, whose will did found the earth, and rear the heaven; which will sustaineth all things, and is the great law of the universe; which reigneth in heaven, and swayeth hell itself. And shall we presume to kick against it?

It is the will of our Maker—of our Preserver—of our Sovereign Lord—of our Judge—of our Redeemer—of our best friend, who loves us far better than we love ourselves. Thus every relation of God recommends his will to us; and each of his attributes does no less; for,

It is the will of him who is most holy; who is perfectly just; who is infinitely wise; who is immensely good: finally, who is uncontrollably powerful. As to his commands, we may *lift up ourselves against them*, we may fight stoutly, we may in some sort prove conquerors; but it will be a miserable victory, the trophies of which shall be erected in hell, and stand on the ruins of our happiness. Conclusion.

SERMON XXXVI.

OF SUBMISSION TO THE DIVINE WILL.

LUKE, CHAP. XXII.—VERSE 42.

Nevertheless let not my will, but thine, be done.

THE great controversy, managed with such earnestness and obstinacy between God and man, is this, whose will shall take place, his or ours. Almighty God, by whose constant protection and great mercy we subsist, doth claim to himself the authority of regulating our practice and disposing our fortunes: but we affect to be our own masters and carvers; not willingly admitting any law, not patiently brooking any condition, which doth not sort with our fancy and pleasure. To make good his right, God bendeth all his forces, and applieth all proper means both of sweetness and severity, (persuading us by arguments, soliciting us by intreaties, alluring us by fair promises, scaring us by fierce menaces, indulging ample benefits to us, inflicting sore corrections on us, working in us and on us by secret influences of grace, by visible dispensations of providence;) yet so it is, that commonly nothing doth avail, our will opposing itself with invincible resolution and stiffness.

Here indeed the business pincheth; herein as the chief worth, so the main difficulty of religious practice consisteth, in bending that iron sinew; in bringing our proud hearts to stoop, and our sturdy humors to buckle, so as to surrender and resign our wills to the just, the wise, the gracious will of our God, prescribing our duty, and assigning our lot unto us. We may accuse our nature, but it is our pleasure; we may pretend

weakness, but it is wilfulness, which is the guilty cause of our misdemeanors; for by God's help (which doth always prevent our needs, and is never wanting to those who seriously desire it) we may be as good as we please, if we can please to be good; there is nothing within us that can resist, if our wills do yield themselves up to duty: to conquer our reason is not hard; for what reason of man can withstand the infinite cogency of those motives, which induce to obedience? What can be more easy, than by a thousand arguments, clear as day, to convince any man that to cross God's will is the greatest absurdity in the world, and that there is no madness comparable thereto? Nor is it difficult, if we resolve on it, to govern any other part or power of our nature; for what cannot we do, if we are willing? What inclination cannot we check, what appetite cannot we restrain, what passion cannot we quell or moderate? What faculty of our soul, or member of our body, is not obsequious to our will? Even half the resolution, with which we pursue vanity and sin, would serve to engage us in the ways of wisdom and virtue.

Wherefore in overcoming our will the stress lieth; this is that impregnable fortress, which everlastingly doth hold out against all the batteries of reason and of grace; which no force of persuasion, no allurement of favor, no discouragement of terror can reduce: this puny, this impotent thing it is, which grappleth with Omnipotency, and often in a manner baffleth it: and no wonder, for that God doth not intend to overpower our will, or to make any violent impression on it, but only to 'draw it (as it is in the prophet) with the cords of a man,' or by rational inducements to win its consent and compliance: our service is not so considerable to him, that he should extort it from us; nor doth he value our happiness at so low a rate, as to obtrude it on us. His victory indeed were no true victory over us, if he should gain it by main force, or without the concurrence of our will; our works not being our works, if they do not issue from our will; and our will not being our will, if it be not free: to compel it were to destroy it, together with all the worth of our virtue and obedience: wherefore the Almighty doth suffer himself to be withstood, and beareth repulses from us; nor commonly doth he master our will other-

wise, than by its own spontaneous conversion and submission to him: if ever we be conquered, as we shall share in the benefit, and wear a crown; so we must join in the combat, and partake of the victory, by subduing ourselves: 'we must take the yoke on us;' for God is only served by volunteers; he summoneth us by his word, he attracteth us by his grace, but we must 'freely come unto him.'

Our will indeed, of all things, is most our own; the only gift, the most proper sacrifice we have to offer; which therefore God doth chiefly desire, doth most highly prize, doth most kindly accept from us. Seeing then our duty chiefly moveth on this hinge, the free submission and resignation of our will to the will of God; it is this practice which our Lord (who came to guide us in the way to happiness, not only as a teacher by his word and excellent doctrine, but as a leader, by his actions and perfect example) did especially set before us, as in the constant tenor of his life, so particularly in that great exigency which occasioned these words, wherein, renouncing and deprecating his own will, he did express an intire submission to God's will, a hearty complacence therein, and a serious desire that it might take place.

For the fuller understanding of which case, we may consider that our Lord, as partaker of our nature, and 'in all things (bating sin) like unto us,' had a natural human will, attended with senses, appetites, and affections, apt from objects incident to receive congruous impressions of pleasure and pain; so that whatever is innocently grateful and pleasant to us, that he relished with delight, and thence did incline to embrace; whatever is distasteful and afflictive to us, that he resented with grief, and thence was moved to eschew: to this probably he was liable in a degree beyond our ordinary rate; for that in him nature was most perfect, his complexion very delicate, his temper exquisitely sound and fine; for so we find, that by how much any man's constitution is more sound, by so much he hath a smarter gust of what is agreeable or offensive to nature: if perhaps sometimes infirmity of body, or distemper of soul (a savage ferity, a stupid dulness, a fondness of conceit, or stiffness of humor, supported by wild opinions or vain hopes) may keep men from being thus affected by sensible objects;

yet in him pure nature did work vigorously, with a clear apprehension and lively sense, according to the design of our Maker, when into our constitution he did implant those passive faculties, disposing objects to affect them so and so, for our need and advantage; if this be deemed weakness, it is a weakness connected with our nature, which he therewith did take, and 'with which,' as the Apostle saith, 'he was encompassed.' Such a will our Lord had, and it was requisite that he should have it, that he thence might be qualified to discharge the principal instances of obedience, for procuring God's favor to us, and for setting an exact pattern before us; for God imposing on him duties to perform, and dispensing accidents to endure, very cross to that natural will, in his compliance and acquiescence thereto, his obedience was thoroughly tried; his virtue did shine most brightly; therefore, as the Apostle saith, 'he was in all points tempted;' thence, as to meritorious capacity and exemplary influence, 'he was perfected through suffering.'

Hence was the whole course of his life and conversation among men so designed, so modelled, as to be one continual exercise of thwarting that human will, and closing with the divine pleasure: it was predicted of him, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;' and of himself he affirmed, 'I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me:' whereas therefore such a practice is little seen in achieving easy matters, or in admitting pleasant occurrences; it was ordered for him that he should encounter the roughest difficulties, and be engaged in circumstances most harsh to natural apprehension and appetite; so that if we trace the footsteps of his life from the sordid manger to the bloody cross, we can hardly mark any thing to have befallen him apt to satisfy the will of nature. Nature liketh respect, and loatheth contempt; therefore was he born of mean parentage, and in a most homely condition; therefore did he live in no garb, did assume no office, did exercise no power, did meddle in no affairs, which procure to men consideration and regard; therefore an impostor, a blasphemer, a sorcerer, a loose companion, a seditious incendiary, were the titles of honor and the elogies of praise conferred on him; therefore was he exposed to the

lash of every slanderous, every scurrilous, every petulant and ungoverned tongue.

Nature doth affect the good opinion and good-will of men, especially when due in grateful return for great courtesy and beneficence; nor doth any thing more grate thereon than abuse of kindness: therefore could he (the world's great Friend and Benefactor) say, 'the world hateth me;' therefore were those, whom he with so much charity and bounty had instructed, had fed, had cured of diseases, (both corporal and spiritual,) so ready to clamor, and commit outrage on him; therefore could he thus expostulate, 'Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?' Therefore did his kindred slight him, therefore did his disciples abandon him, therefore did the grand traitor issue from his own bosom; therefore did that whole nation, which he chiefly sought and labored to save, conspire to persecute him with most rancorous spite and cruel misusage.

Nature loveth plentiful accommodations, and abhorreth to be pinched with any want: therefore was extreme penury appointed to him; he had no revenue, no estate, no certain livelihood, not 'so much as a house where to lay his head,' or a piece of money to discharge the tax for it; he owed his ordinary support to alms, or voluntary beneficence; he was to seek his food from a 'fig tree on the way;' and sometimes was beholden for it to the courtesy of publicans; δι' ἡμᾶς ἐπτώχευσε, 'he was,' saith St. Paul, 'a beggar for us.'

Nature delighteth in ease, in quiet, in liberty: therefore did he spend his days in continual labor, in restless travel, in endless vagrancy, 'going about and doing good;' ever hastening thither, whither the needs of men did call, or their benefit invite; therefore did he 'take on him the form of a servant,' and was among his own followers 'as one that ministereth;' therefore he 'pleased not himself,' but suited his demeanor to the state and circumstances of things, complied with the manners and fashions, comported with the humors and infirmities of men.

Nature coveteth good success to its designs and undertakings, hardly brooking to be disappointed and defeated in them: therefore was he put to water dry sticks and to wash negroes,

that is, to instruct a most dull and stupid, to reform a most perverse and stubborn generation; therefore his ardent desires, his solicitous cares, his painful endeavors for the good of men did obtain so little fruit, had indeed a contrary effect, rather aggravating their sins than removing them, rather hardening than turning their hearts, rather plunging them deeper into perdition than rescuing them from it; therefore so much in vain did he, in numberless miraculous works, display his power and goodness, convincing few, converting fewer by them; therefore, although he taught with most powerful authority, with most charming gracefulness, with most convincing evidence, yet, 'Who,' could he say, 'hath believed our report?' Though he most earnestly did invite and allure men to him, offering the richest boons that heaven itself could dispense, yet, 'Ye will not,' was he forced to say, 'come unto me, that ye may be saved:' although, with assiduous fervency of affection, he strove to reclaim them from courses tending to their ruin, yet how he prospered sad experience declareth, and we may learn from that doleful complaint, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not!' οὐκ ἠθελήσατε, your will did not concur, your will did not submit.

In fine, natural will seeketh pleasure, and shunneth pain: but what pleasure did he taste? what inclination, what appetite, what sense did he gratify: How did he feast or revel? How, but in tedious fastings, in frequent hungers, by passing whole nights in prayer and retirement for devotion on the cold mountains? What sports had he, what recreation did he take, but feeling incessant gripes of compassion, and wearisome roving in quest of the lost sheep? In what conversation could he divert himself, but among those whose doltish incapacity and forward humor did wring from his patience those words, 'How long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?' What music did he hear? What but the rattlings of clamorous obloquy, and furious accusations against him? To be desperately maligned, to be insolently mocked; to be styled a king, and treated as a slave; to be spit on, to be buffeted, to be scourged, to be drenched with gall, to be crowned with thorns, to be nailed to a cross; these were the delights which our Lord

enjoyed, these the sweet comforts of his life, and the notable prosperities of his fortune: such a portion was allotted to him, the which he did accept from God's hand with all patient submission, with perfect contentedness, with exceeding alacrity, never repining at it, never complaining of it, never flinching from it, or fainting under it; but proceeding on in the performance of all his duty and prosecution of his great designs with undaunted courage, with unwearied industry, with undisturbed tranquillity and satisfaction of mind.

Had indeed his condition and fortune been otherwise framed; had he come into the world qualified with a noble extraction; had he lived in a splendid equipage: had he enjoyed a plentiful estate and a fair reputation; had he been favored and caressed by men; had he found a current of prosperous success; had safety, ease, and pleasure waited on him: where had been the pious resignation of his will, where the precious merit of his obedience, where the glorious lustre of his example? How then had our frailty in him become victorious over all its enemies; how had he triumphed over the solicitations and allurements of the flesh, over the frowns and flatteries of the world, over the malice and fury of hell? How then could he have so demonstrated his immense charity toward us, or laid so mighty obligations on us?

Such in general was the case, and such the deportment of our Lord: but there was somewhat peculiar, and beyond all this occurring to him, which drew forth the words of our text: God had tempered for him a potion of all the most bitter and loathsome ingredients that could be; a drop whereof no man ever hath, or could endure to sip; for he was not only to undergo whatever load human rage could impose, of ignominious disgrace and grievous pain; but to feel dismal agonies of spirit, and those 'unknown sufferings,' which God alone could inflict, God only could sustain: 'behold, and see,' he might well say, 'if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me; wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?' He was to labor with pangs of charity, and through his heart to be pierced with deepest commiseration of our wretched case: he was to crouch under the burthen of all the sins (the numberless most heinous sins and

abominations) ever committed by mankind: he was to pass through the hottest furnace of divine vengeance, and by his blood to quench the wrath of heaven flaming out against iniquity: he was to stand, as it were, before the mouth of hell, belching fire and brimstone on his face: his grief was to supply the defects of our remorse, and his suffering in those few moments to countervail the eternal torments due to us: he was to bear the hiding of God's face, and an eclipse of that favorable aspect, in which all bliss doth reside; a case which he that so perfectly understood could not but infinitely resent: these things with the clearest apprehension he saw coming on him; and no wonder that our nature started at so ghastly a sight, or that human instinct should dictate that petition, 'Father, if thou wilt, let this cup pass from me;' words implying his most real participation of our infirmity; words denoting the height of those sad evils which encompassed him, with his lively and lowly resentment of them; words informing us how we should entertain God's chastisements, and whence we must seek relief of our pressures, (that we should receive them, not with a scornful neglect or sullen insensibility, but with a meek contrition of soul; that we should intirely depend on God's pleasure for support under them, or a releasement from them;) words which, in conjunction with those following, do show how instantly we should quash and overrule any insurrection of natural desire against the command or providence of God. We must not take that prayer to signify any purpose in our Lord to shift off his passion, or any wavering in resolution about it; for he could not anywise mean to undo that, which he knew done with God before the world's foundation; he would not unsettle that which was by his own free undertaking and irreversible decree: he that so often with satisfaction did foretel this event, who with so earnest desire longed for its approach; who with that sharpness of indignation did rebuke his friend offering to divert him from it; who did again repress St. Peter's animosity with that serious expostulation, 'the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' who had advisedly laid such trains for its accomplishment, would he decline it? Could that heart, all burning with zeal for God and charity to men, admit the least thought or motion of

averseness from drinking that cup, which was the sovereign medicine administered by divine wisdom for the recovery of God's creation? No; had he spake with such intent, legions of angels had flown to his rescue; that word, which framed the worlds, which stilled the tempest, which ejected devils, would immediately have scattered his enemies, and dashed all their projects against him: wherefore those words did not proceed from intention, but as from instinct, and for instruction; importing, that what our human frailty was apt to suggest, that his divine virtue was more ready to smother; neither did he vent the former, but that he might express the latter.

He did express it in real effect, immediately with all readiness addressing himself to receive that unsavory potion; he reached out his hand for it, yielding fair opportunity and advantages to his persecutors; he lifted it up to his mouth, innocently provoking their envy and malice; he drank it off with a most steady calmness and sweet composure of mind, with the silence, the simplicity, the meekness of a lamb carried to the slaughter; no fretful thought rising up, no angry word breaking forth, but a clear patience, enlivened with a warm charity, shining in all his behavior, and through every circumstance of his passion.

Such in his life, such at his death, was the practice of our Lord; in conformity whereto we also readily should undertake whatever God proposeth, we gladly should accept whatever God offereth, we vigorously should perform whatever God injoineth, we patiently should undergo whatever God imposeth or inflicteth, how cross soever any duty, any dispensation may prove to our carnal sense or humor.

To do thus, the contemplation of this example may strongly engage us; for if our Lord had not his will, can we in reason expect, can we in modesty desire to have ours? Must we be cockered and pleased in every thing, whenas he was treated so coarsely, and crossed in all things? Can we grutch at any kind of service, or sufferance? Can we think much (for our trial, our exercise, our correction) to bear a little want, a little disgrace, a little pain, when the Son of God was put to discharge the hardest tasks, to endure the sorest adversities?

But farther to enforce these duties, be pleased to cast a

glance on two considerations: 1. What the will is to which, 2. Who the willer is to whom, we must submit.

1. What is the will of God? Is it any thing unjust, unworthy, or dishonorable, any thing incommodious or hurtful, any thing extremely difficult or intolerably grievous, that God requireth of us, to do or bear? No: he willeth nothing from us or to us, which doth not best become us and most behove us; which is not attended with safety, with ease, with the solidest profit, the fairest reputation, and the sweetest pleasure.

Two things he willeth; that we should be good, and that we should be happy; the first in order to the second, for that virtue is the certain way, and a necessary qualification to felicity.

'The will of God,' saith St. Paul, 'is our sanctification:' What is that? what, but that the decays of our frame, and the defacements of God's image within us, should be repaired; that the faculties of our soul should be restored to their original integrity and vigor; that from most wretched slaveries we should be translated into a happy freedom, yea, into a glorious kingdom; that from despicable beggary and baseness we should be advanced to substantial wealth and sublime dignity; that we should be cleansed from the foulest defilements, and decked with the goodliest ornaments; that we should be cured of most loathsome diseases, and settled in a firm health of soul; that we should be delivered from those brutish lusts, and those devilish passions, which create in us a hell of darkness, of confusion, of vexation, which dishonor our nature, deform our soul, ruffle our mind, and rack our conscience; that we should be endowed with those worthy dispositions and affections, which do constitute in our hearts a heaven of light, of order, of joy, and peace, dignify our nature, beautify our soul, clarify and cheer our mind; that we should eschew those practices, which never go without a retinue of woful mischiefs and sorrows, embracing those which always yield abundant fruits of convenience and comfort; that, in short, we should become friends of God, fit to converse with angels, and capable of paradise.

'God,' saith St. Paul again, 'willeth all men to be saved:' 'he willeth not,' saith St. Peter, 'that any man should perish.'

He saith it himself, yea, he sweareth it, 'that he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live.' And what is this will? what, but that we should obtain all the good whereof we are capable; that we should be filled with joy, and crowned with glory; that we should be fixed in an immovable state of happiness, in the perpetual enjoyment of God's favor, and in the light of his blissful presence; that we should be rid of all the evils to which we are liable; that we should be released from inextricable chains of guilt, from incurable stings of remorse, from being irrecoverably engaged to pass a disconsolate eternity in utter darkness and extreme woe? Such is God's will; to such purposes every command, every dispensation of God (how grim, how rough soever it may seem) doth tend. And do we refuse to comply with that good will; do we set against it a will of our own, affecting things unworthy of us, things unprofitable to us, things prejudicial to our best interests, things utterly baneful to our souls? Do we reject the will that would save us, and adhere to a will that would ruin us; a foolish and a senseless will, which, slighting the immense treasures of heaven, the unfading glories of God's kingdom, the ineffable joys of eternity, doth catch at specious nothings, doth pursue mischievous trifles; a shadow of base profit, a smoke of vain honor, a flash of sordid pleasure; which passeth away like 'the mirth of fools,' or 'the crackling of thorns,' leaving only soot, black and bitter, behind it?

But at least ere we do thus, let us consider whose will it is that requireth our compliance.

It is the will of him, whose will did found the earth and rear the heaven; whose will sustaineth all things in their existence and operation; whose will is the great law of the world, which universal nature in all its motions doth observe; which reigneth in heaven, the blessed spirits adoring it; which swayeth in hell itself, the cursed fiends trembling at it: and shall we alone (we pitiful worms crawling on earth) presume to murmur, or dare to kick against it?

It is the will of our Maker, who, together with all our other faculties, did create and confer on us the very power of willing: and shall we turn the work of his hands, the gift of his bounty, against him?

It is the will of our Preserver, who, together with all that we are or have, continually doth uphold our very will itself; so that without employing any positive force, merely by letting us fall out of his hand, he can send us and it back to nothing: and shall our will clash with that, on which it so wholly dependeth; without which it cannot subsist one moment, or move one step forward in action?

It is the will of our sovereign Lord, who, on various indisputable accounts, hath a just right to govern us, and an absolute power to dispose of us: ought we not therefore to say with old Eli, 'It is the Lord, let him do to me as it seemeth good to him?' Is it not extreme iniquity, is it not monstrous arrogance for us, in derogation to his will, to pretend giving law, or picking a station to ourselves? Do we not manifestly incur high treason against the king of heaven, by so invading his office, usurping his authority, snatching his sceptre into our hands, and setting our wills in his throne?

It is the will of our Judge, from whose mouth our doom must proceed, awarding life or death, weal or woe unto us: and what sentence can we expect, what favor can we pretend to, if we presumptuously shall offend, oppose that will, which is the supreme rule of justice and sole fountain of mercy?

It is the will of our Redeemer, who hath bought us with an inestimable price, and with infinite pains hath rescued us from miserable captivity under most barbarous enemies, that obeying his will we might command our own, and serving him we might enjoy perfect freedom: and shall we, declining his call and conduct out of that unhappy state, bereave him of his purchase, frustrate his undertakings, and forfeit to ourselves the benefit of so great redemption?

It is the will of our best Friend; who loveth us much better than we do love ourselves; who is concerned for our welfare, as his own dearest interest, and greatly delighteth therein; who, by innumerable experiments, hath demonstrated an excess of kindness to us; who in all his dealings with us purely doth aim at our good, never charging any duty on us, or dispensing any event to us, so much with intent to exercise his power over us, as to express his goodness towards us: who never 'doth afflict or grieve us' more against our will, than against his own desire; never indeed but when goodness itself calleth for it,

and even mercy doth urge thereto; to whom we are much obliged, that he vouchsafeth to govern and guide us, our service being altogether unprofitable to him, his governance exceedingly beneficial to us: and doth not such a will deserve regard; may it not demand compliance from us? To neglect or infringe it, what is it? is it not palpable folly, is it not foul disingenuity, is it not detestable ingratitude?

So doth every relation of God recommend his will to us; and each of his attributes doth no less: for,

It is the will of him, who is most holy, or whose will is essential rectitude: how then can we thwart it, without being stained with the guilt, and wounded with a sense of great irregularity and iniquity?

It is the will of him, who is perfectly just; who therefore cannot but assert his own righteous will, and avenge the violation thereof: is it then advisable to drive him to that point by wilful provocation; or to run on the edge of necessary severity?

It is the will of him who is infinitely wise; who therefore doth infallibly know what is best for us, what doth most befit our capacities and circumstances; what in the final result will conduce to our greatest advantage and comfort: shall we then prefer the dreams of our vain mind before the oracles of his wisdom? shall we, forsaking the direction of his unerring will, follow the impulse of our giddy humor?

It is the will of him, who is immensely good and benign; whose will therefore can be no other than good-will to us; who can mean nothing thereby but to derive bounty and mercy on us: can we then fail of doing well, if we put ourselves intirely into his hands? are we not our own greatest enemies, in withstanding his gracious intentions?

It is, finally, the will of him, who is uncontrollably powerful; whose will therefore must prevail one way or other; either with our will or against it, either so as to bow and satisfy us, or so as to break and plague us: for, 'My counsel,' saith he, 'shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.' As to his dispensations, we may fret, we may wail, we may bark at them; but we cannot alter or avoid them: sooner may we by our moans check the tides, or by our cries stop the sun in his career,

than divert the current of affairs, or change the state of things established by God's high decree: what he layeth on, no hand can remove; what he hath destined, no power can reverse: our anger therefore will be ineffectual, our impatience will have no other fruit, than to aggravate our guilt and augment our grief.

As to his commands, we may 'lift up ourselves against them,' we may fight stoutly, we may in a sort prove conquerors; but it will be a miserable victory, the trophies whereof shall be erected in hell, and stand on the ruins of our happiness; for, while we insult over abused grace, we must fall under incensed justice: if God cannot fairly procure his will of us in way of due obedience, he will surely execute his will on us in way of righteous vengeance; if we do not surrender our wills to the overtures of his goodness, we must submit our backs to the strokes of his anger: he must reign over us, if not as over loyal subjects to our comfort, yet as over stubborn rebels to our confusion; for this in that case will be our doom, and the last words God will design to spend on us, 'Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.'

'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever.' Amen.

END OF VOL. II.

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